



“BEHOLD OUR NEW EMPIRE”—MUSSOLINI



LOUISE DIEL

“Behold Our New Empire”—  
Mussolini

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My journey through Italian East Africa, of which this book is an account, took place under the lucky star of high patronage and was marked by the kindest hospitality. I should like, in this place also, to express heartfelt gratitude to all those concerned.

LOUISE DIEL.



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## INTRODUCTION

‘THE Empire is an accomplished fact.’

The line joining Milan to Mogadiscio has been drawn on the map of the world. Rome is creating for itself a new sphere by the Red Sea and building its arch of triumph as far as the Equator. A young, growing nation's new territory can, thanks to active minds and willing hands, look to a promising future. Progress is being achieved, and work done, that is a tribute to the statesman-like qualities of the men who direct affairs.

Fascist imperialism rejects arbitrary methods and ruthless exploitation. It is making good on the basis of the recognition, amply confirmed by experience, that the greatest victories are not won, nor rewarded, by money or the equivalent of money—if that were not so, the March on Rome, and the March from Rome, would become milestones without historic importance. Its purpose was, is, and will be, to supply a capable and diligent people with the best and quickest means of development. A nation which lacks space and essential endowments cannot progress.

None is better able to sympathize with this demand for profitable colonial possessions than we Germans, whose hearts echo the words of Herr Hitler: “Without the addition of colonies, German territory is too small to guarantee undisturbed, safe, and permanent sustenance of the people. . . . Germany demands colonial equality.”

We protest against the suppression of our freedom and rights, for we are not content to be restricted to confined Middle-European space, with its scanty supplies of raw material, any more than Italy was content to be regarded as ‘Prisoner of the Mediterranean.’



Be it observed that the Mediterranean is a sea free to the world and that the nations whose shores it washes are free nations. In Naples—not far from the now famous place where, in October 1936, the statue of St. Augustus was unveiled in honour of the troops who started out from there to conquer an empire—the ‘Mediterranean Lighthouse’ keeps guard and sends nightly its warning light in the direction taken by the steamers which cross to Sicily, the *Isola Imperiale*.

In the summer of 1937, for the first time on record, the big Italian manœuvres were held on the Island of Eternal Spring. These ‘Imperial Manœuvres’ provided Mussolini and the entire Italian nation with the proud certainty that Sicily, the ‘bridge-head of the Empire,’ could now be looked upon, as the official statement announced, as impregnable. Never again would a foreign soldier set foot on its shores. The significance of this established fact may be gained from what the Duce stated in his speech at Palermo. “For your island one of the happiest epochs in your four thousand-year-old history is beginning. This epoch is closely bound up with an historic event which we have the great happiness of witnessing: the founding of the Second Roman Empire—*Sicily represents the geographic centre of the Empire.*”

That was what Mussolini, the ‘Founder of the Empire,’ told his people on an occasion when he came into closer personal touch with them than at any previous time. He visited the peasant population, danced with the women, went down into the sulphur mines, and swam far out to sea—when will his feet touch land at Massaua or Assab? When will a huge electric sign, ‘Dux’—similar to the one on Monte Pellegrino above Palermo—shine on the Red Sea coast to mark the gratitude of all those colonists who have been enabled to establish homes on African soil instead of, as in earlier times, merely existing there as foreign settlers?

The renaissance, after fifteen centuries, of the Roman Empire, that is Italy’s victory in East Africa, is to us, as representatives of a leading European Great Power, also of

deep significance; and we follow the progress of this hitherto undeveloped land with sympathetic interest. It is, however, very difficult for us to obtain a true picture of what is taking place, by reason of the many unreliable news items, proceeding from hostile sources, and incorrect reports—these do not intend to mislead but are misleading through ignorance of the true facts—which reach us from time to time.

What is Italian Ethiopia now like? Is it possible 'over there' to live and travel decently? That is what everyone interested in the subject asks.

This book contains the answer. This I can supply not only candidly and honestly, but fairly comprehensively, too, as I travelled in almost every part of the country and was able to see all I wanted to see.

My readers will readily understand that I feel not a little proud, and consider myself exceedingly fortunate, to be the first of my sex in the writing profession to have set eyes upon Abyssinia since the change. I travelled alone, taking with me, in lieu of companions, a camera and a typewriter. I carried no weapons of any description. Instead, I took along a walking-stick, which at the very start I managed to leave somewhere in Asmara. I never had occasion subsequently to regret its loss. All the same, I make no pretence of being particularly courageous or even daring. I never regarded my journey in the light of an adventure, but set out with the serious motive of seeing, learning, and experiencing enough of the Abyssinia of to-day to enable me to give a true description of the country.

In discussing my third visit to Africa—the first took me to Libya, the second to Tunis—Signor Mussolini said: "You will find a good deal less 'Africa' than you expect."

We shall see how ~~correct~~ he was.



## CHAPTER I

### ITALIAN EAST AFRICA TO-DAY

#### THE RATE OF PROGRESS

**I**T was a strange African scene that we saw. What an uproar, what restless activity, what feverish haste ! It was enough to make ordinary people dizzy. If only the wheels would stop, and other movements cease, for a moment, one might have some chance of taking in the picture ; but even then it would be very difficult to notice all the details.

That scene is characteristic of *A.O.I.* (*Africa-Orientale-Italiana*, in other words Italian East Africa), where events overtake each other at remarkable speed. What happened last week, to-day is something so remote as to be almost forgotten. One might suppose that this bustling activity would lead to a good deal of confusion and chaotic conditions, and from what I have said in the opening lines of this chapter, one would be perfectly justified in reaching such a conclusion. Let it be said at once that if we judge on that assumption, we shall be judging falsely.

Cart and lorry wheels never stop turning, and, Sundays as well as weekdays, men's fists, hardened and calloused, hammer unceasingly. The guiding principles are—don't stop ; keep at it ; work steadily on towards the goal. The object of it all is to pave the way, here on unprepared African soil, for the settlers who are to make the land their home. That is why the wheels go on turning and why everyone is anxious to make progress at the greatest possible speed.

Is it possible now, in these first stages of construction, for things to be any different ? In all spheres of life preparatory

work must first be undertaken, and, whatever it happens to be, a start has to be made. Tasks of such difficulty can only be mastered with the aid of abundant energy and willingness to work.

What is being done is amazing. Statistics at first glance are of little value ; they are always out of date. To-day we see a house in the first stages of building ; to-morrow the roof is on. Development advances with such giant strides that anyone accustomed to normal conditions and measures of time suddenly finds his thoughts unable to keep pace with it.

Rather over a decade ago, I witnessed the great ' Prosperity Drive ' in the United States, and I have seen in South America, too, how rapidly life can go round. But that was nothing in comparison with the drumlike rhythm which has seized the Italians in East Africa, and evidently is not going to release its hold in a hurry.

It is my wish to provide readers with an opportunity of examining (as though through a magnifying-glass) this highly-important work of development, which has been going on now for more than eighteen months, so that they may get to know it in all its phases and features.

Here it is not so much a matter of quoting figures and record sums, although these objective, reliable witnesses, so useful as guides and indicators, should certainly not be despised. But the trouble is that they do not stay constant ; all the time they are being beaten and left behind. Consequently, in forming our estimate of conditions as a whole, we should never regard statistics as wholly reliable, even if these be the latest figures available, for one must not forget that after a few months, or indeed in a much shorter time, they will be no longer accurate. Nevertheless, statistics do provide us with something upon which to base our calculations, and they serve a useful purpose as a starting-point from which we can proceed, without it being necessary repeatedly to call upon fresh figures for assistance.

The period which I propose to examine step by step is fundamentally important and will pass into history as the





DUKE OF AOSTA

first and most momentous epoch in the creation of the Italian colonial empire, in the course of which a State, hitherto existing in very primitive circumstances, is being Europeanized.

#### DO YOU KNOW ITALIAN EAST AFRICA ?

The old Abyssinian inland empire, which lies in North-East Africa, between the 5th and 15th degrees N. of the Equator, is described in a few words. It occupies a thirtieth part of the Black Continent (30 million square kilometres), that is it consists of approximately one million square kilometres, and is, therefore, more than twice as large as the German *Reich* and three times the size of Italy. One-third of Africa (10 million square kilometres) is held by Britain, and 43 per cent (13 million square kilometres) belongs to France. A third is roughly as large as the whole of Europe. What remains is divided between Italy (3,200,000 square kilometres), Belgium, Portugal, Spain, and independent Egypt. Germany formerly possessed 2,700,000 square kilometres of African territory.

About a half of Abyssinia lies above 6000 feet above sea level. Even to-day there are mountain groups, virtually unexplored, which in the past have been inaccurately marked on the map. It has now been found, too, that the same thing can be said of many of the small rivers and places. It may be assumed that new surveys will be carried out, showing that the well-watered highland area, fed by the Atbara, the Setit, the Mareb, and the Sobat, which flows into the White Nile, has up to now been incorrectly marked. Whether the all-important Lake Tana and the the Blue Nile will also produce surprises of a like nature is for the present a matter of conjecture.

A network of roadless valleys and mule-tracks made it appear impossible, especially during the four-month rainy period from June to September, for an army to advance into the country. There were good reasons for it being stated in the autumn of 1935, when hostilities were commenced, that the nature of the country and absence of



roads would provide a European expeditionary force with almost insuperable difficulties and that, even should these be overcome, the high plateau of the interior, with its rugged mountains and rocky valleys, still would represent an impregnable fortress. One needs only to fly over the land in an aeroplane to appreciate the terrible magnificence of this lonely stretch of mountains, whose highest peaks are in the region of 15,000 feet, and to look down upon the awe-inspiring Devil's Kitchen of Dankalia, with its neighbouring giant volcanoes, caved-in craters and motionless lava-fields, in order to understand why for so long Ethiopia was permitted to remain unchallenged an independent land, and continue—after Egypt and China—as the oldest State on earth. And anyone who has personally experienced the horrors of the endless, sun-scorched plain, where water is almost non-existent and vegetation totally non-existent—who knows this side of 'Africa' needs not to be told that the Italian campaign was anything but a picnic. A stranger in the land has not to look far before also finding similar stretches in the proximity of the coast. In the neighbourhood of the ports of Massaua and Assab, on the Red Sea coast, few Europeans would be able to maintain good health permanently. On the Sudan frontier, too, which lies in the west of Abyssinia, not many white men could stand the climate for any long period of time.

Having started by describing those natural characteristics of the country which are far from being attractive, we must in justice hasten to add that there are many areas in Italian East Africa which are indescribably lovely, fertile, and fruitful. I have often been able to compare scenes with similar ones in Switzerland or Italian Tuscany, and there were many times when I imagined myself in the Dolomites ; for a while it was hard to realize that I was in Africa. I can easily understand that many Italians, even those who come from the Italian Riviera, feel so much at home on African soil that they have no desire to leave it again.

Abyssinia connects with Italy's oldest colony, gained in 1885, Eritrea (on the Red Sea) in the north, and Somaliland

(on the Indian Ocean) in the south, so that Italian East Africa now forms a united territory occupying an area of over 1,700,000 square kilometres, the longest distance between any two points being 1250 miles. Incidentally, it is interesting to recall that the former frontiers between Abyssinia and the two Italian colonies also had a total length of 1250 miles. The Italian colonial empire thus equals a sixth of France's colonial empire.

The frontiers of Italian East Africa, apart from those which are provided by the sea, meet those of French and British Somaliland in the north-east and that of Southern Sudan in the west. Obviously, the Suez Canal, which was opened in 1869, joining the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, is of the utmost importance to Italian East Africa, and Italy could never suffer its loss.

#### ‘PRIMAVERA ASMARINA’

Italians and travellers of many other nationalities have always been loud in their praises of the Sicilian spring, which, as *Primavera Siciliana*, has long enjoyed a world-wide reputation. There is little doubt, too, that that reputation will last. At the same time, the splendid climate of Asmara (in Eritrea), of Dembi Dollo (Western Abyssinia), of Harar (*Primavera Hararina*), and many other places, can well compete with that of Sicily. It might be added, though, that Asmara possesses a rare air similar to that of Addis Abeba, where at an altitude of about 8000 feet one would, of course, expect it. Many Europeans, myself among them, do not feel particularly well in these two cities and suffer from palpitation of the heart and other inconveniences associated with height. The sudden changes in temperature after sunrise and sunset also have a bad effect on many people. It is a slow process accustoming oneself to nights which are very cold, mornings and evenings which are rather cool and to middle-days with summer heat.

We have heard and read a lot about the tropical fever climate of the low-lying marshy areas and primeval forests of Abyssinia, and of the ‘great’ rainy period (June to

October)—the 'small' rainy period is during April and May—of which the traveller who starts his journey at the end of October is supposed to discover no trace. I made many notes of these reports before starting out on my journey, but soon discovered on my arrival in the country how one may be misled by them. When I reached Addis Abeba at the end of November, it was raining in torrents, and for days the deluge continued, making me bitterly regret my unwise action in leaving my umbrella at home. On the other hand, I found that I was extremely lucky in taking my tropical helmet to Massaua, which I did despite the many assurances, verbal and written, that no European wore a *casco* there. How it is possible to exist in that hot, humid greenhouse atmosphere without one, I cannot imagine. According to other reports, the malaria boundary was reached at about 3000 feet. I also found that that statement had no foundation in fact.

Of the three climatic belts which encircle Abyssinia I only got to know two. These were the first, between the altitudes of 3500–5000 feet, with an average shade temperature of 75–95 degrees, and the second with an average temperature of 55–80 degrees, situated at 5500–10,000 feet. I made practically no acquaintance with the third zone, which lies between the altitudes of 10,000 and 14,000 feet. Of certain short mountain expeditions, and of my travels by land and air, I do not wish to speak at present.

There is no question that the climate in the higher regions is easier to support than that of the plains. I always felt at my best at altitudes between 4000 feet and 5500 feet, particularly in well-wooded districts. On many occasions when we were travelling by motor we met with tropical, sub-tropical, and European vegetation on the same day.

One lives according to the sun-dial. At six in the morning, day suddenly breaks, and from minute to minute you see it getting lighter. At six o'clock in the evening, with equal suddenness, darkness spreads. This abrupt change from day to night, and from night to day, seems to me symbolical of African life and movement. We miss the

transition periods, the hours of dawn and dusk, the budding and slowly fading periods of life. Man, beast, and plant, suddenly appear to us in their full maturity, and with equal suddenness and rapidity they grow old and perish. The 'tropics bestow their gifts in lavish abundance, and snatch them back with frightful gruesomeness, almost before there has been a chance to appreciate their virtues.

It will not suffice to describe the climate here as 'frightfully hot' and there as 'pleasantly warm'; it is a climate too varied to permit of such brief descriptions. Why, for instance, should a robust, healthy Italian during his two-year stay in Italian East Africa lose sixteen strong, healthy teeth? So many similar, and often distinctly unpleasant, symptoms can only be set down to the climate—scientific investigations are now being carried out in this direction. In any case, it is clear that the European is strongly influenced, both mentally and physically, by the African soil and its climate. He himself seldom stops to think of this matter, but we find him one day complaining that he is 'no longer the man he used to be.' Actually, it is not 'he' who is at fault, but 'it,' the climate, which is beginning to take effect. About this matter I have more to say later on.

In early days, the Italian Government in Eritrea and Somaliland was already maintaining numerous, big and small, meteorological stations. Since the spring of 1937, six central observatories have been established in the principal cities of Italian East Africa: Addis Abeba, Gimma, Gondar, Asmara, Harar, and Mogadiscio. In addition, thirty main stations and roughly half a hundred smaller ones have been started. Professor Fantoli, organizer and head of the colonial meteorological service, personally covered 7500 miles between March and July, 1937. He stated that according to his observations most rain would occur in the south-west zone of the high plateau, that is in the neighbourhood of Gore. Information of that type is of the utmost value in determining the best sites for raising new crops and starting new settlements. The fact that very active work is being undertaken in this

particular sphere helps one to gain some idea of the thorough methods which are being employed in Italian East Africa.

#### THE INHABITANTS

I have not yet picked up two books which were in agreement about the size of the native population in Abyssinia. As a national census has never been taken in Abyssinia, it is quite impossible to say definitely whether 5 million or 20 million inhabitants is nearer the truth. No doubt, the Italians, too, are finding difficulties in compiling statistics of this nature. In the various districts a reasonably accurate estimate can be arrived at by counting the number of *tukuls* (the round huts of the natives). But to go farther, and count, family by family, the scattered peasant population, is an infinitely more difficult matter, firstly, for the reason that travel itself is anything but easy in the remote districts and, secondly, because many tribes are constantly on the wander. Moreover, large numbers of the peasant population spend several days each week on their way to the nearest market place to dispose of their produce on market days.

According to an Italian estimate of 30 July 1936 the total number of inhabitants in Italian East Africa was 7,600,000. These are split up as follows :

Eritrea	.	.	.	.	.	1 million
Somaliland	.	.	.	.	.	1·3 millions
Amharaland	.	.	.	.	.	2 „
Galla-Sidama Zone	.	.	.	.	.	1·6 „
Harar Province	.	.	.	.	.	1·4 „
Addis Abeba District	.	.	.	.	.	3 „

The modern historical and ethnological student would find a rich and as yet practically untouched field for his investigations, and the language expert would be in his element. There are not less than fifty different languages and a large number of widely differing dialects, which have not yet received the close attention of the expert. Great difficulties have stood in the way of visiting all districts for

the purpose of thoroughly studying their inhabitants, and explorations of this kind were often undertaken at considerable personal risk, owing to the fact that each prince (Ras) and headman (Shoum) was a law unto himself, and treated the 'intruder,' even if the latter were fully furnished with official documents, as mood and avarice dictated. He might be permitted to stay on, in which case he would probably be very badly treated, or he might be forced immediately to turn back.

Naturally, all this has been altered, and soon the world of learning will be able to decide not only whether it be true that the Queen of Sheba indeed had some connection with the 'Royal House of Solomon,' but also whether there is any truth in the claim that a third of the Abyssinian population is comprised of Semitic Amharas whose ancestors are said to have settled in the land 600 years B.C. Presently, too, we should be in a position to know more about the numbers and characteristics of the Somalis, Gallas, and Danakils, who belong to a superior class of native and are said to make up the remaining two-thirds of the population.

At the commencement of the war, Italy made known—and she has given practical proof of this since—that she had no desire to interfere with native differences and century-old quarrels; all her subjects were to receive like treatment. For the Hamitic Gallas, who in ferocity leave nothing to be desired, a better time is now starting, and they take advantage of every opportunity of having their revenge on the Amharas who for years were their oppressors. But the latter, clever, warlike, and grasping, are well able to take care of themselves and still understand how to instil fear into their foes. Italy is steadily and relentlessly putting into practice the declaration given by Mussolini on 9 May 1936: 'I want to create for all Ethiopian races an Empire of civilization and humanity.'

The natives have now begun to feel that in might and greatness Mussolini and his principal lieutenants are a match for the man whose name, to-day as much as at any time, means to them everything that is mighty and powerful

—that of Emperor Menelik. For many years after his death, which occurred about a quarter of a century ago, the magic of his name held the disunited tribes in some kind of check. The last Negus, Haile Selassie, was not a born leader, and he failed to gain the unconditional support of his people in the hour of danger.

Mussolini's iron fist and the many charitable institutions, whose presence the natives are now beginning to feel, are not lacking in double effect. Before the Italian conquest, one often heard and read that it was a shame that the last 'independent' African empire should vanish from the map. During my travels in Africa I was often forced to think of that, in ignorance conceived, necrology. The Abyssinian nation—if it is possible to speak of this conglomeration of tribes as a nation—could never know worse conditions of slavery, poverty, and disease than those which existed during the time of 'freedom' under the last Negus. They had nothing to lose but everything to gain. Without the leadership of white men they would never have made progress, for they had none of those qualities which are necessary in order to achieve self-liberation and civilization.

I should like to touch briefly upon the slavery question. Although the last Negus introduced the required legislation—in order to qualify for admission to the League of Nations—for all practical purposes nothing was altered, and slave trading continued as before. It has been estimated that, including those who were born as slaves, the total number of slaves in the country was two millions. One of Italy's first actions after her victory was to proclaim, in early October 1935, the liberation of slaves, and wherever the *Tricolore* was hoisted, the proclamation was put into practice. In the northern province of Tigre not less than 16,000 slaves were immediately released.

The entire Abyssinian nation was in slavery. Now the people can learn to lead a decent human existence, if they really desire it.

## THE NATIVES LEARN TO WORK

The Fascist motto : ' We are against the easy life,' is certainly not an easy one to pass on to an African people who for centuries have been in the habit of regarding work as something shameful and fit only for slaves.

Work ? If a man was strong, he became a soldier or gained a living by methods of violence. The peasants—and there are millions of them—admittedly did a certain amount of work in the fields, but none dreamt of growing more than he needed for his own family and for the purpose of barter. Why should he ? The peasant was obliged to deliver 25 per cent of his crops to his master, the church took its tithe, and, in addition, there were the various other taxes and charges demanded by the *shoum*, to say nothing of the extra claims of district chiefs and robber bands. All those who worked for their living met with a similar experience. Who, in those circumstances, could find any pleasure in work, especially in the absence of an agreement to which both master and man were obliged to adhere ?

The tailors, weavers, and tanners, are in their way efficient and industrious. You see them hard at it from early morning till late evening ; but how small is their number against that of the idlers and loiterers who are seen everywhere. There are many who would prefer to beg for alms outside the house of some European, be turned away, and come back again on the following day, rather than employ the same amount of time in earning the few coppers for themselves.

The inertia of the people, for which the climate is not greatly to blame, and disastrous financial and economic conditions, which the Negus was never capable of mastering, together were responsible for producing a state of affairs so rotten that no one had the courage to attempt to remedy them, even if it had been within his power to bring about some improvement.

Whether the Abyssinians are totally incapable of finding joy in work, or whether that feeling has been merely



suppressed by unfavourable circumstances, is one of the things that will soon be found out.

Formerly, the poorer class of people, that is the slaves, in return for their work received only their modest keep and were never paid in money, with the result that they had no incentive to do good work, and lacked all encouragement to do better work. A man who was his own master—the thought of work in any case never dawned on him.

It is clearly impossible for a people in such a primitive state of development and entirely deficient of initiative, to get themselves out of the rut, unless they are governed by a strong, civilized nation.

Skilful methods are being employed to achieve a betterment. Premiums and prizes, which are much coveted by the natives, are being awarded for all kinds of work, and these are having good effect.

It has often been doubted that the natives are strong enough to undertake hard manual labour. This is a question which may be answered both in the affirmative and the negative. There are, for instance, many men able to run and keep pace for hours with their master's horse or mule, and they will do this without stopping for food and in addition to carrying a rifle over the shoulder. These same men, in many instances, could not spend hours breaking stones or performing similar hard work, to which they have never been accustomed in the past. I have often watched the two things—the smooth, untiring movements of the runner, and the weary, feeble arm-movements of the road-maker—and have wondered whether time will bring a change.

The way in which the male youth of the country suddenly undergoes a change for the worse on reaching the age of puberty is astounding. Up to their fifteenth year the boys are easy to instruct and can be very useful; in fact, there are plenty of people glad to entrust them with simple technical jobs which, none the less, demand skill and application. Then suddenly comes the day—so many Italian employers have assured me—when they abruptly

change and become worse than useless. To reason with them, or even threaten, is a waste of time.

Perhaps Italian influence, which is now being brought to bear upon the younger generation, may succeed in bringing about a change in this direction. The authorities confidently hope that this will be so, and are leaving no stone unturned to arouse in the native youth feelings of honour and manly courage, and so develop him into a useful and worthy Italian subject.

Italy again had just cause to be proud of the performance of her Libyan, Eritrean, and Somali soldiers in the last war. Years of patient schooling and careful training had brought their reward. Slowly but surely they will accomplish the same in Abyssinia.

#### CHRISTIAN AND MUSSULMAN

The heathen form of a Coptic-Christian religious service, held outside the church in the open, would astonish any German Christian, and he would have a task to find anything very 'Christian' in the priests or the people taking part in it. When I first witnessed this weird ceremony, with its special dances and curious singing, accompanied by rattles and drums, I thought I was attending a tribal feast. That was until the senior priest handed me the big silver Cross, which, following the example of an Italian general, I kissed three times and touched with my forehead.

Abyssinia is very proud of being regarded as a Christian empire since the fourth century, ruled by emperors who received baptism. Most Amharas belong to the Coptic Church. The number of Coptic priests is legion. They are permitted to marry, but the monks, from whose ranks the high dignitaries of the Church are drawn, live in celibacy. In contrast to the ordinary Coptic priests, whose only qualifications need be singing and reading, and who have always existed in rather idle and poor circumstances, the monks in their monasteries have steadily educated themselves and in their way constitute an intellectual caste. They have continued to supply intellectual munitions since

the sixteenth century, making it hard for the invading hordes of savage Gallas to harm the empire even in the religious field. But the monks have always kept themselves apart, teaching reading and writing only to the sons of important persons. Moreover, they exerted very little active influence on the people, who remained through the centuries ignorant and superstitious and, even in religious matters, totally unenlightened. Church 'Service' was attended, and the numerous festivals, customs, and rites, were kept up—and there it ended.

The Italian Government did not wait long before issuing a decree according to which no one who had not made certain studies, and could not reach a certain standard of education, would in future be allowed to become a Coptic priest. Apart from this decree and one other which abolished high taxes payable to the Church and the Church ownership of land—the rich estates were taken over by the State, which, however, allowed the Coptic Church to continue to hold them on a ten-year lease—apart from those changes, which were made on secular rather than on religious grounds, the Government has not interfered. On the contrary, the Copts are encouraged to keep their feasts—for instance, the Easter Feast, held in the spring, and the Mascal Feast at the end of September, at the conclusion of the rainy period—in the old traditional way, the Government making use of these occasions to announce new legislation and beneficial policy to the people, by means of the wireless, posters, and the papers.

'To the People of Addis Abeba :

'To-day the great Mascal Feast begins. Peace and tranquillity be with you and your families. To-morrow, in order to heighten the joy of the feast, the Government will release two hundred prisoners. Although the Government intends to proceed sternly against those who oppose its orders and attempt to disturb the peace, it at the same time means to behave with generosity to the

poor and those who have made their submission and who keep the Law.

‘ People of Addis Abeba :

‘ Find happiness in the great feast, be joyful, and conduct yourselves quietly ; go about your work in peace, because the Government is constantly thinking of you.’

In the capitals of the five provinces of Italian East Africa, the Governors address similar proclamations to the faithful. Here and there, at the end of a feast, money, diplomas, and gun licences are distributed to the people. Demonstrations of loyalty to the King-Emperor, the Duce, and the Viceroy take place, and all arms are raised giving the Roman salute. There is silence while Graziani speaks : “ Anyone who bows to kiss the shoes—even if they belong to the greatest of men—is not a man, but a slave. Italy wants her Ethiopian subjects to be free men, and to show it by saluting in the manner of native-born Italians, who greet each other as the ancient Romans used to do.”

An artillery salute proclaims the commencement and the finish of the festivities, which consist of elaborate processions, performances of the ‘ Lion Fantasy,’ parades, and bonfires.

The priesthood is now to receive material support from the Italian Government, who in return demand political neutrality and genuine submission. This is a many-sided and important subject, which I propose mentioning elsewhere in connection with the question of the recent breaking away of the Abyssinian Church from the Egyptian Mother Church.

I should like, though, to speak for a moment of those Abyssinians who profess Mohammedanism, the Somalis and the Gallas being the principal members of this religion. In this case, too, I propose to return to this question when I come to speak about Mussolini’s main aims and far-seeing policy, and of the importance of Islam to the future of the East. There are three hundred million Mohammedans in

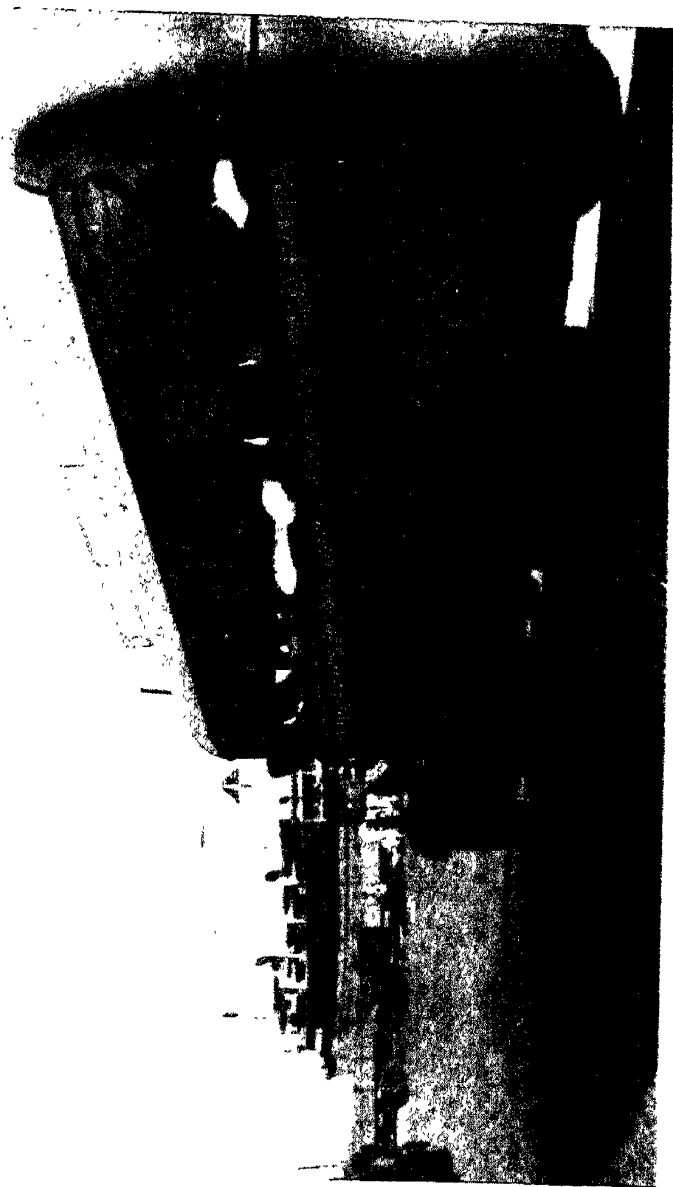
the world who to-day look upon the Head of the Italian Government as a friend, if not as the protector of their Church. Every single Mussulman knows that at Tripoli, in March 1937, Mussolini solemnly received the 'Sword of Islam,' and afterwards declared that the moment was one of the most unforgettable in his life.

The Mohammedans in Italian East Africa can definitely be considered as dependable subjects of the Empire. The laws of their religion are of a severity that is not exceeded by the laws of Fascism—that is a point of view of considerable importance, and it substantially facilitates collaboration. Mohammedan festivals naturally enjoy the recognition of the Italian Government. At the close of Ramadan, which is celebrated in early November from new moon to new moon, the Governors receive the native chiefs, watch a march-past of the people, make speeches and present decorations and awards—the programme being practically the same in all the provinces.

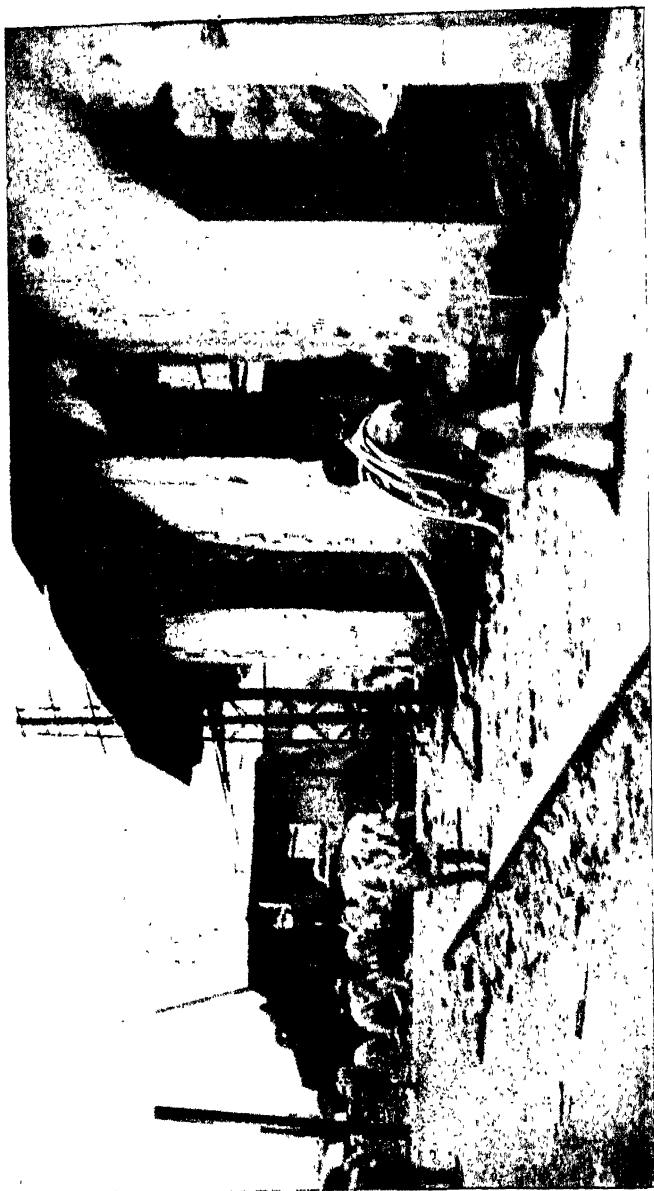
Occasions are continually being sought, and found, either by the erection and opening of a Mohammedan mosque, by founding a Mussulman school, or by including in the weekly film programme (which includes Italian national films) a production specially designed to please the Islamitic community, to reward the loyalty of Mohammedan subjects and to earn their gratitude.

#### IS THE WAR IN ABYSSINIA REALLY FINISHED ?

When I returned from Italian East Africa, I was at first surprised to find this question so often put to me, especially by older, thoughtful people. But the reason is not far to seek. People still remember the various revolts, guerrilla warfare, and risings which went on for years in the young colonies of all nations. One has only to think of the opposition which England was continually meeting in the Sudan and India, of the almost proverbial Moroccan revolts, and—to quote a case in East Africa—the armed resistance with which the German colonists at first met. In French Somaliland, a neighbouring territory of Abyssinia, the



AT THE QUAYSIDE IN MASSAUA



This is the condition in which the Italians discovered all streets when they entered Addis Abeba early in May 1936.

French also had some highly unpleasant experiences. Many a Frenchman set out on a hunting trip never to return to Djibuti alive ; and that sort of thing happened when this colony had already been thirty years in French possession. It may be that experiences of this kind are responsible for the decline in the number of emigrants, which is causing the British and French colonial authorities many worries and hindering the development of their giant foreign possessions.

The German people are not in ignorance of this. Another reason why events in Italian East Africa are being watched with such live and genuine interest.

Shortly before I left for Africa, in October 1937, the Press of a certain country, in writing of the uncertain conditions in Italian East Africa, did everything it could to give its readers the impression that hell had been suddenly let loose there. It was that, more than anything, which sent me hurrying on my way. I became impatient to see for myself what things were really like in Italian East Africa.

It was not very hard to make up my mind ; and the fact that I returned safe and sound, and met with no unpleasant incidents, speaks for itself. No one can contest that, particularly as my journey through the whole land was followed abroad and details of it were reported. People may say I had luck. Certainly I was lucky. Can anyone, especially a woman, travel for months in Africa, fly almost daily, undertake strenuous motor drives into very remote regions, change suddenly from a mild climate into a tropical one, submit to rapid changes in altitude, and yet keep in good health, without possessing that elusive gift which we call ' luck ' ? And yet there is no doubt that luck alone would not have been enough to protect me if conditions in Italian East Africa had had any resemblance to those invented in certain reports.

I have often had to laugh in thinking that, not so many years ago, before the Italo-Ethiopian war broke out, there were many educated Englishmen who scarcely knew where Abyssinia lay or what it was like there. Even the Negus



himself could not give information about many districts and events in his country, for the simple reason that they were strange to him. But now everybody seems to know about everything, so much so that one can only marvel at so much knowledge. Therefore it is well that one should not forget the wholesale robbery which formerly existed, led by never satisfied princes and countless small chiefs. And it would hardly be going too far to describe all those Amharas who robbed the country, cut down great forests, attacked caravans, and stole herds of cattle as traitors of the worst type.

With these rascals Italy has settled accounts. And yet if an occasional crime is reported—formerly they were part of the daily round—or should, in some far-away place in the forest, a violent robbery occur, in the course of which Europeans fall among the victims, there is such an outcry in the newspaper world that one would be quite justified in assuming that the Empire was on the totter.

Malicious tongues have spread it about that Italy hushes up all incidents of that nature and is unwilling to admit the existence of unruly elements in the remoter places and that occasionally there are clashes between them and the authorities. Such people should be referred to the Italian Press, which publishes monthly the official casualty list from Italian East Africa, issued by the Government, which appears under the heading, 'Golden Book of East-African Heroes.' These casualty lists bear a serial number. No. 28 appeared in mid-November 1937, and like all previous and succeeding ones, it gave full particulars of the officers and other ranks who lost their lives, or who were wounded or missing, on punitive expeditions and police patrols. No casualty list since the war ended, that is since 5 May 1936, was so heavy as this one, which is explained by the fact that every year, immediately before and, especially, immediately after the rainy period, during which all trade is brought to a standstill, strong hordes of brigands endeavour to make the most of an opportunity to provide against the thin times. But the authorities anticipated this, and made their plans accordingly. The man who, in ignorance of the customs of

the land, interprets this October punitive expedition as a rekindling of the flames of war, that is, who goes on a wrong assumption, and puts the Italian losses down to that account, is merely displaying his lack of knowledge.

List No. 28 showed that, during the critical time from 3 October to 31 October, in the whole of Italian East Africa 1447 colonial soldiers lost their lives, 180 died of wounds, and 33 were reported as missing. The total number of losses between 1 January 1935 and 31 October 1937 was 4058—accordingly the month of October 1937 produced a high record number. But in the next month, November 1937, only 6 officers, 1 N.C.O., 10 Blackshirts, and 1 private gave their lives for their country, that is a total of 18 soldiers. In other months there were similarly small casualty lists.

As it has not been possible to ascertain how many fire-arms were in the possession of the people during the time of the Negus, or how many were subsequently smuggled across the French and British frontiers, it follows that there is no means of discovering whether the 297,295 rifles, 1542 pistols, 1011 machine-guns and quick-firers, and 171 guns, which have been surrendered during the last two years, represent the total armoury of the natives in Italian East Africa. It is more likely that many natives, who, like children, are fond of playing with firearms, have taken care to conceal some in their homes. That does not mean, of course, that they have evil intentions, or that the possession of weapons makes them into rebels. Only too well they know that the Italian Government acts without mercy towards rebellious elements, though she may be perfectly willing to receive former foes as subjects, so long as they are not playing a double game. Mock submission is severely punished, and Coptic priests, who behind the backs of the authorities have been engaged in hostile political activities, have had to pay for their treachery with their lives. Many in the nick of time managed to escape across the frontier into Kenya Colony. Thousands of these fugitives have made themselves at home there—what happens to them now is a matter for the British.

## FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY

Here is a sober record of events which seem little less than miraculous.

In the course of a conversation, which I had not so long ago with Marshal Badoglio, I inquired which examples and personalities in history could have guided them in surmounting the unique difficulties of the Abyssinian campaign. Highly amused, he closed one eye, and said: "Our Columbus—we found his egg."

So, in considering the many events, previously regarded as impossible achievements in a colonial war, posterity should bear that in mind!

For the first time in history, a European army, four hundred thousand strong, penetrated to the heart of an immense country in under seven months and founded an empire. . . .

For the first time, between twenty and thirty large bombing planes were carried in a ship and, on arrival in port, were put ashore in less than twenty-four hours. . . .

Never before have 90,000 horses, camels, and mules, 13,500 motor vehicles, 500,000 rifles, 12,000 machine-guns, 800 guns, and 400 tanks passed through the Suez Canal in such a short time. . . .

. . . Another reason why, in the spring of 1935, and for the first time, steamers arrived at the Port of Massaua at the rate of eighteen a day. . . .

It is the first time that four thousand miles of good roads have been constructed in an enemy country actually during war operations. . . .

It is certainly for the first time in history that four hundred military aeroplanes have been employed in transporting 2500 tons of war material and other articles. . . .

Equally, it has never before happened that aircraft has for periods supplied large bodies of troops with munitions, food supplies and, indeed, with live cattle. . . .

For the first time (as Badoglio telegraphed to Mussolini shortly before the occupation of Addis Abeba) four thousand soldiers were obliged to carry seventy tons of foodstuffs on

their shoulders on a twenty-five mile march through mountainous terrain. . . .

It is unique in colonial history that five army-corps should be simultaneously employed in a mass attack along a fifteen-mile front. . . .

Never before has the liberation of slaves been proclaimed, and put into practice, while warlike operations were still going on. . . .

This is the first occasion that a European Great Power has conquered a colonial territory with an already worked-out plan of development on proper constructive lines instead of on those of ruthless exploitation. . . .

And it is certainly without precedent in Abyssinian history that its postal and telegraph services should operate punctually and efficiently. . . . The rainy period is now losing its terrors, now that good roads and stout bridges permit men and animals to pass in safety. . . .

For the first time the cities are finding out what good administration and social services mean, and the country dwellers what hard work will produce out of the soil. . . .

But that is enough—it is not the purpose of my book to anticipate, but to speak only of events and phases of development which in themselves are unique.

#### HOW ITALY TREATS HER SUBJECTS

The sharp distinction, noticeable also in conversation, which is made between natives and nationals (Italians by birth) and between subjects (natives) and citizens (Italians by birth) should be noted in order that conditions may be properly understood. The term 'native' is never used contemptuously, and it is rare to hear Italians speak of 'coloured people,' a term which is used so frequently in the United States.

From the start the Abyssinians—if they behaved themselves accordingly—were treated as humans, but not with cordiality, which would have been misplaced. The old feudal system reduced the people to servitude, and the

Koran, too, preaches the moral of fear ; Italy, to establish her control, also had to adopt the I-am-master attitude.

Italian soldiers and workmen are by nature very sociable, and it is evident that many of them find it hard to avoid comradely terms with the worthy natives. It will be easily understood that, constantly associating with them in the course of their duties, it would be easy to break down the wall which must be maintained between European and native. The strong love of Italian men for children is the reason why many pay special attentions to the pretty, black, curly headed native women. Whether and to what extent such friendliness is misinterpreted and abused, thus causing harm, is a matter difficult to judge, but there is no doubt that there are instances in which damage is done. It is important to bear in mind the childlike mentality of the Abyssinians and remember that if one gives them an inch they take a yard. It is extremely difficult to make rules and regulations establishing how far innocent relations should be allowed to go. This is something which individual Italians should test for themselves. Their everyday experiences could then be pooled and useful conclusions drawn.

In every colonial land this is a serious and difficult problem. We are aware that the British grant their subjects many privileges, and the same thing can be claimed about the French.

I made my own observations in French Djibuti and compared them with the sum of those I made in Italian Ethiopia, but conditions in the two countries are so fundamentally different that no sort of parallel can be drawn. In French Somaliland there are a mere hundred or two Frenchmen, while Italy's sons are constantly streaming into Italian East Africa, where they come into close contact with the native population at every hour and place. Naturally, their situation is much more difficult.

But at the same time, of course, it is more secure and, in the colonial sense, infinitely more important, since the numerical strength and universal presence of white men is

of inestimable value, whose effect will increase year by year.

Within a few weeks of the end of the war, the Italian Government opened the Empire's first school for natives in Addis Abeba and placed in charge a master from the Italian National School in Eritrea. Almost simultaneously, efforts were made also to organize groups of young people outside the school and educate them, copying the example of a similar organization in Libya, as the 'Ethiopian Youth of the Littorio.' But very soon it became evident that these endeavours were premature, whereupon instructions came from Rome to suspend them until new general lines could be laid down.

Meanwhile, in all important places, and in many quite small ones, too, dozens of national schools, staffed by European and native teachers, were established for the instruction of the native boys.

The *Missione Consolata*, whose activities in Abyssinia extend back through many decades, also maintains several schools of this type and, in July 1937, opened in Addis Abeba one to take approximately a hundred native children. It is named after Clementine Graziani, mother of the great general. Where there is a demand for them, carpentry classes, dormitories, hospitals, and crèches for infants are also being provided.

For Ethiopian schoolchildren, whose ages range from seven to twenty years, education is voluntary; there has been no attempt yet to introduce compulsory attendance at school. Despite that, each school consists of two or three classes with a total attendance of between thirty and two hundred pupils. The latest statistics of the schools in Eritrea, where thousands of children attend more or less regularly, show that rapid progress is being made.

Typical local buildings, most of which had to be built, serve as schools. In the course of my travels, I saw school-houses of bamboo, wood, straw and grass, corrugated iron, and, not infrequently, stone, and in all cases one saw a large blackboard, a teacher's desk, and, on the walls, pictures of

the King-Emperor and the Duce. I was often surprised to discover how in a few months the children made progress in the Italian language and how admirably they behaved.

From this generation the Italians will derive valuable helpers. By placing orphaned children in special homes a social-pedagogic work has been introduced of which there is no parallel in the country's past history.

Equally new and novel are the 'Freedom Villages,' assembly places, and similar institutions, which have been provided for former slaves of the district and for those coming from other parts of the country. Agencies and labour offices function for the purpose of providing natives with work. In many places it has been possible for ex-slaves to find employment with their former masters on the basis of a 'fifty-fifty' agreement, in accordance with Italian wage regulations, by which the employer is guaranteed in advance a certain share of the crops. As far as possible support for the poor, and the old and feeble, is being provided and, in addition, something is being done for needy ex-officers who have made their submission.

Of things generally, it can be stated that, in the old days, people, country, and industry were treated as the prey of those who represented the State. There was robbery and plunder on every hand. Even the fact that Haile Selassie, during the time he was ruler of the land, established two 'public' schools can have little influence on one's judgment of the picture as a whole.

The people are aware of the transformation, which in all spheres of life is a change for the better. In Addis Abeba a wealthy native recently contributed a large sum of money, which he requested the Viceroy to devote to charitable causes, as an expression of his compatriots' gratitude—for Italy is treating her subjects with humanity and good sense.

## ADDIS ABEBA PAST AND PRESENT

The capital which Emperor Menelik II built half a century ago, on a site more than 8000 feet above the sea, can already look back on a lively past.

Until the terrible days of early May 1936 the city, to a certain extent, existed in a state of fairyland slumber. No one knew whether there were sixty thousand or a hundred thousand inhabitants: they had never been counted. Even the number of 'White' residents was assessed at any figure between two and five hundred. Hardly a motor was to be seen in the streets, which were not designed for modern traffic, but for the horse and mule, which perfectly satisfied the simple needs of the local people. There was neither street lighting nor street sanitation. Animal carcasses were left at the roadside at the mercy of hordes of semi-savage curs.

Shaded by tall eucalyptus trees, the round huts and wooden barracks of the natives lay scattered over an area equivalent to that occupied by the city of Paris. In the whole of Abyssinia there were only seven thousand stone-built houses. A system of sanitation did not exist, and water was laid on in very few houses. Without any attempt at town-planning, houses of all types—wood, corrugated iron, stone—were erected in the heart of the city. The big *arc de triomphe*, put up in honour of the last Negus, and which bore an inscription in French, was of cardboard. The Ghebi, the Negus' residence, consisted of a motley assembly of buildings which hardly conformed with our conception of a palace. People suffering from leprosy, who were free to go about and beg for alms, openly visited the hot spring on the Ghebi hill-side. Debtors who failed to meet their obligations were chained to their creditors, and thus fettered they appeared in the streets. In addition to an ancient cartridge factory, the only industrial undertakings were a soapmaker's and an oil refinery. Two telegraph offices were at the service of the public, and of them Europeans used the line served by Italian postal officials, which was more dependable than, and half the



price of, the other. The telephone exchange boasted of three hundred and fifty subscribers. There was no inspection of slaughter-houses, and so eating meat was always attended by danger. But it seems futile to comment upon such a small matter as that—all life, living, eating, and drinking went on under the most insecure conditions.

That was until catastrophe suddenly intervened and buried the past under its smouldering ruins. Not that enemy fire caused the destruction, but the Abyssinians themselves, who set fire to the city and robbed and murdered many of its inhabitants. Not even the lions, living emblems of the House of Judah, escaped. An earthquake could not have produced greater desolation than was left by this orgy of destruction.

The formation of the Government Council of Addis Abeba represented in the cleansed and liberated capital the first administrative-political organization to be established in Italian East Africa. Immediately, measures were taken to prevent all kinds of speculative building. The ill-equipped aerodrome was placed in serviceable order. A system of twenty-five miles of roads, and paths for pedestrians, which were a complete innovation, was commenced in all parts of the city. Until the new water mains, drawing their supplies from the River Akaki, and satisfying the requirements of three hundred thousand people, could be ready, a temporary water system was provided. With the aid of the Italian National Electricity Works, the great *C.O.N.I.E.L.* concern was formed to take over the construction and administration of thermo-electrical and hydro-electrical plant in Italian East Africa. The new roads have been provided with temporary drainage, which is to be replaced by a permanent system as soon as problems of the soil and other troublesome questions have been dealt with.

Mention of what has been done in the way of construction, and a consideration of plans which are being made for the future, give us a clear picture of a city which is beginning to flourish, especially if we bear in mind the conditions which previously existed.



A new, large native village is to form part of the new town-planning scheme, which will comprise five zones occupying a total area of 24 square kilometres, of which 19 million square metres are ear-marked as building terrain. In the centre there is the business quarter, and south of that, in the proximity of the railway station, commences the extensive industrial zone. The residential quarter in the east of the city adjoins the political and administrative district. It would take us too far here to mention the various areas which have been allotted for hotels, sport, and the military, but it is not without interest to note that none of the buildings is allowed to contain more than two floors.

The extensive western area of the city is reserved for the ninety thousand odd natives, who are strictly segregated in groups according to race and creed. It has been established that the Mohammedan community consists of four hundred and fifteen families totalling sixteen hundred and fifty persons. All caravans, whether arriving or departing—and their number is many hundreds a month—can proceed to and from the native quarter and the market-place without passing through the other city areas. The market naturally takes the place of first importance in the life of the natives, whose joy consequently was great when, in October 1937, the foundation stone of a new market was laid in the Tecloimanot Quarter. Of the four thousand new *tukuls* to be erected many hundreds have already been built, and every family that builds its new home receives from the State a subsidy of four hundred lire as well as a substantial plot of ground round the hut.

Growing cities, stretching out their arms to the future, are bound to exercise a fascination upon all industrious and energetic people. Everyone tries to imagine what it will look like to-morrow, as well as to dream of the possibilities which the future will bring to the individual. Two thousand private motors and three thousand lorries help to fill the city's streets, most of which are still in the stage of being constructed; and they add considerably to the

scene of activity. The African capital of the Empire lies on radio-active soil, and its mountain air is another powerful energizer galvanizing the people into activity and maintaining them alert and keen. That is an important factor in the work of construction. Not even the rainy season has been allowed to interfere with work, and all roads which, on 28 October 1937, the anniversary of the March on Rome, were solemnly dedicated have since been completed.

Without special permission, no one is allowed to erect a building. Plans have to be submitted and a commission watches over the construction until the building is finished. At the end of 1937 the price of building land was fixed at a minimum of three lire a square metre in the outer city, and at a maximum of two hundred and fifty lire a square metre in the inner city. As well as these price regulations, there are others affecting the building market, and their object is to prevent profiteering. How close this danger might lie may be judged from the never-ending stream of house-hunters who find their way to Addis Abeba. By May 1937 the city already held 4839 Italian men, 281 women, 1147 men and 917 women of other nationalities (of whom 73 were German and 20 Austrian). A new census, taken in January 1938, revealed that the number of Europeans and foreigners was not less than 22,733, the Italians accounting for 12,103.

‘AT WHATEVER COST, IT MUST BE DONE!’

It goes without saying that if a country is to be successfully colonized it must be equipped with good roads, bridges, and viaducts.

Remarks of that kind are easy to make, but people who utter them so often fail to take into account the superhuman sacrifices which such pioneer work frequently demands.

Many of the new main arterial roads in Italian East Africa, which have a total length of 2140 miles, wander along the edges of precipices and tons of rock have had to be blasted away to clear the path. In many cases the work-

men had to be roped together, as without that precaution it would have been impossible for them to work in any degree of safety.

Many bridges were built in circumstances of real peril. As stones cannot tell of the frightful human sufferings which occurred near them, the Italians have honoured the dead, who sacrificed their lives that the work might go on, by inscribing on an arch of one of the bridges words which touch the heart : ' Whatever the cost, we had to do it ! ' No one who passes that way can escape a feeling of awe and admiration for these fallen heroes of work.

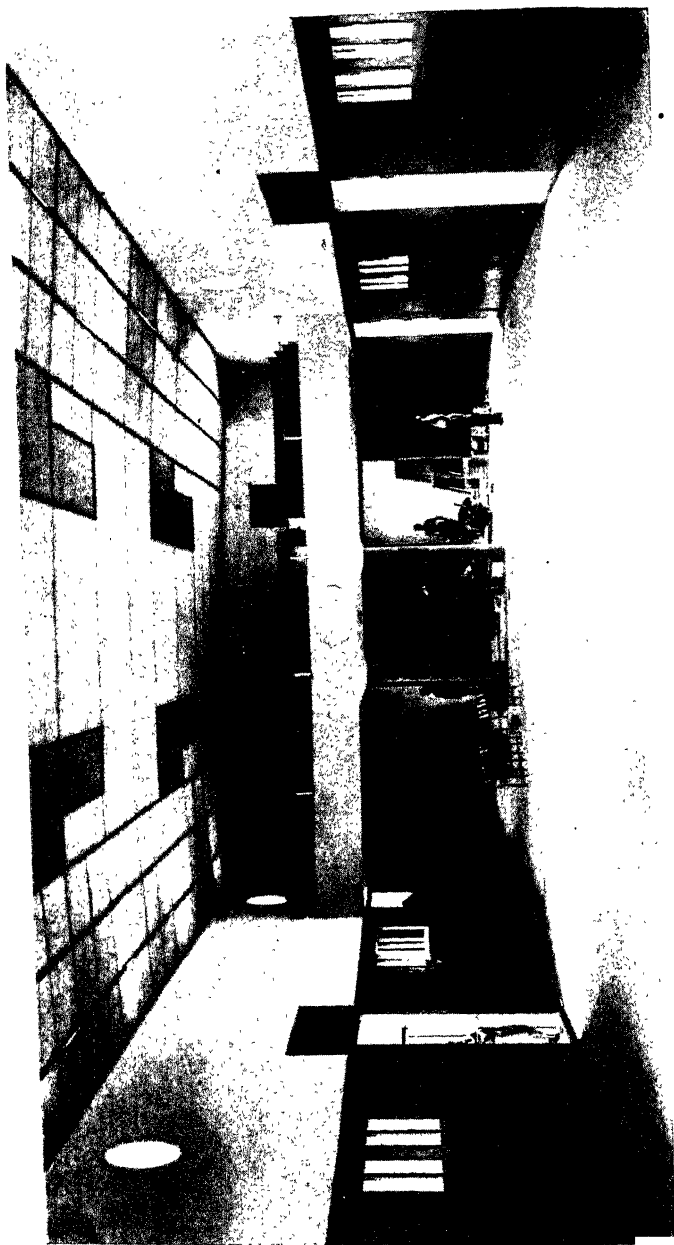
After the war ended, whole army corps were at once set to work with pick and shovel so that the huge road-building programme might make the quickest possible progress in this great roadless country. From the very commencement it was recognized that, both at the present time and in the future, roads are a more important means of communication than the railways. Here a contrast might be made with the United States of North America, which, more than eighty years ago, were opened up by means of a widespread system of railways.

Evidently, it is not possible at present to introduce in Italian East Africa a close network of roads after the European pattern. Work as yet is being confined to the main thoroughfares and roads of secondary importance—and that is no small undertaking !

The nature of Abyssinia's soil provides even modern engineers with hard problems, to say nothing of the heavy cost which must be met in carrying on this work. The Italian Government might have copied the example of the last Negus, who placed the contract for the building of the road from Diredaua to Harar in the hands of an English concern, and, when it was finished, charged highly for the use of the road. In that way he quickly regained the sum spent on its construction and, in addition, harvested a very handsome yearly profit. The country's only railway, which extended from Addis Abeba to Djibuti, was another valuable source of income. All travellers were obliged to



THE FASCIO HOUSE, 'CASA LITTORIA,' IN DIREDAUA SHORTLY BEFORE ITS COMPLETION



THE NEW FASCIO HOUSE, 'CASA LITTORIA' IN DIREDDA IS BEING EQUIPPED WITH A  
CINEMA TO HOLD 1000 PERSONS

make use of these ways of communication and also had to pay the high charges, or abandon the idea of travelling.

But Italy, instead of acting in this way, gave strict attention to national interests and placed a hundred thousand labourers and enormous sums of money in the service of road construction in Abyssinia. With State permission, four hundred and twenty-eight building and road-building concerns, at their head the universally famous firm of Puricelli, and seventy-two firms, which are supplying materials, have a hand in the work. The average cost of building a metalled road is between 950,000 and 1,200,000 lire a kilometre. But a gradual reduction of the cost may be achieved, as methods are being improved, and as new ones are continually being found, and as more and more native workmen, among them many ex-slaves, who naturally are willing to work for less than Italian labourers, are now being employed in this sphere. Supervision and direction of the work will, of course, rest with the Italians.

The Italian workmen, cut off from the rest of the world, live on terms of good comradeship and in special living and housing conditions. Great attention is paid to sanitary arrangements, especially as the climate in many instances exerts an unfavourable influence of a man's ability to keep doing good work. Naturally, men whose health has been impaired by the work, and the relatives of those who have lost their lives, are looked after by the State. Frequently, the Viceroy and Governors in the course of their tours of inspection visit a number of the four hundred and fifty-three labour camps, satisfy themselves regarding the living conditions of the men occupying them, and urge a speeding up of the work in hand. At the height of the rainy season, in August 1937, Marshal Graziani, driving his own car, and attended only by a small escort, toured the whole northern area of Italian East Africa, covering a distance of 1075 miles. Everywhere he was received with acclamation. Although it was in the rainy season, all the labour camps were at work and the weekly forty-eight hours were, without exception, kept up. Now, to a large extent, Italian workmen



whose contracts have expired are being replaced by natives, of whom there is no lack of recruits for road-building.

Everything has to be done well and yet done quickly. Traffic has already reached such an extent that roads as soon as they are completed for a certain distance are at once put into service. Up to 30 June 1937, 956 miles of new roads, 114 large and 3810 small bridges were opened to traffic. The fact that large parties of workmen are frequently in the way does not disturb motorists in the least—they just keep their hands on the horn until the way is clear.

Any one who has not seen the traffic here can have no idea of its extent. Hundreds of lorries, large and small, follow each other in a long procession and very unwillingly give way to the equally large number of private motors which want to pass them. Any one who has had to follow behind a close column of roughly a hundred and fifty lorries, and been forced to swallow their dust, knows how maddening that can be. And here it happens everywhere, every day, and at every hour. All the new roads of the Empire are used to a degree that German country roads, which generally run parallel with the railway, seldom see.

On the road which now runs from Djibuti to Addis Abeba five times as many goods are carried as on the railway. Discounting the air route, goods and passenger traffic between Asmara and Addis Abeba can only proceed by road, the air route being for this purpose of secondary importance. It is claimed that this 750-mile journey can be done by car in a bare twenty-seven hours, but from my own experience and inquiries, two or three days would be a more reasonable allowance for this up and downhill route. It is hardly possible to maintain a speed of more than 20 m.p.h. and during the rainy season there is no doubt that this average would have to be substantially reduced. The luxury motor buses, which operate along this road twice a week and are exclusively for the use of white people, stop three nights on the way—at Quiha, Dessie, and Debra Sima.

This need not cause any surprise, especially when former

conditions in Abyssinia are recalled and one bears in mind that nowhere in the world has more rapid and comprehensive work been carried out in circumstances of equal difficulty. In all periods of history the Italians have shown themselves to be first-class road-builders. In Italian East Africa, too, one can be certain that they will make roads of all categories as well as it is possible for them to be built. The most impatient observer cannot but realize the enormous difficulties and heavy cost of importing the necessary machines, parts, and apparatus from Italy, and, in addition, the severe tax which the transfer of this material through Africa places upon men, transport, and roads.

At the same time, the road-building programme drawn up by the Duce, which is the first necessity in the exploitation of the colonial empire, is being carried through efficiently and in accordance with the time schedule.

#### THE FASCIST PROGRAMME OF DEVELOPMENT

Emphasis should first be placed on the word 'Fascist,' and with that in mind we can then turn our attention to the various items of construction and the other works which have been accomplished in Italian East Africa. Without the Fascist spirit, such quick results would not have been possible. Who has watched progress in Italy during the last fifteen years, and witnessed the renaissance of Ancient Rome, needs only to recall to memory the apparatus responsible and in his mind transplant it in Italian Ethiopia, where it operates with the same admirable rhythm and efficiency.

It is superfluous here to mention all the individual societies, charity organizations, and professional associations, though, in Italian East Africa, on account of different conditions, their tasks are of a very much more diverse nature.

Problems of housing and food, of changed occupations and altered family life are the most urgent, and these receive first claim to attention.

The need of the hour is to take stock—this election slogan of the first Fascists is now being practically applied in Italian East Africa.

In the first year of the Empire new experiences were gathered, and conditions faced with the same undaunted courage in Africa as they had been faced previously when the Fascists seized power in October 1922. Members of the Party, and representatives of industry, agriculture, and science, got together and considered in the first place how they could satisfy the most essential living requirements of workers of all grades. They erected modest workmen's settlements, social rooms, and messes, and when that was done, they set to work—copying an Italian example, amended to suit African conditions—on the *Dopolavoro* scheme. The first vegetable gardens made their appearance on the outskirts of the cities, and the soil was tested, not only by special commissions, but also by representatives of the authority which had a particular interest in the crops which it was likely to produce. Small trial crops achieved astonishing results. Soldiers of peasant origin handed in a request for an agricultural concession, and tractors, ploughs, and other land machines were imported from Italy and placed at the disposal of the Government.

The great work of development is being built of many small stones, and each one is of importance and complementary to the others. All Italian workmen who arrive without their families and whose contracts are only for a stated period, automatically become members of the National Volunteer Militia, live with their comrades, and are subject to discipline. This is a measure both useful and practical in many ways. Naturally, all employees are entitled to help from the ambulance section of the Fascist Militia, and in all big centres sanatoria, military hospitals, and first-aid stations give treatment to those who require it. When a serious illness makes it necessary for a man to return to Italy, treatment and material support are also granted him when he reaches home.

The exodus of trades-people and business men of all kinds

to Italian East Africa is governed by regulations agreed to by the authorities in Italy and Africa.

Following Mussolini's special order, preference is given to ex-servicemen. Many thousands are in Government and private employment. In many instances, heads of families have decided to emigrate not only with their own families but with 'in-laws' and distant relations as well, to build up a family business in the new country. That is typical of the best traditions of Italian family life, a feature which is more strongly marked in this nation than most others.

It is not yet possible to foretell which occupations will be mostly in demand in Italian East Africa in the near future. Not until agricultural colonization has further advanced will it be possible to arrive at any accurate conclusions about this. The State budget for Italian East Africa provides for a six-year plan. In July 1937 it was made known that the following funds were to be made available for purposes of development :

Roadbuilding . . . . .	7730	million lire
Harbour Services . . . . .	670	" "
Hydraulic Plant and Subsidies for Hydro-Electric Plant . . . . .	30	" "
Sanitary Services . . . . .	550	" "
Improvement of Agriculture . . . . .	100	" "
Building . . . . .	1894	" "
Development of Arable Land . . . . .	200	" "
Telegraph, Telephone, and Wireless Services . . . . .	60	" "
Military Works . . . . .	493	" "

In connection with this programme of development, special mention should be made of the *C.O.N.I.E.L.* concern, which was founded on 2 October 1936, with the help of 124 Italian firms. Its task is to employ existing waterways for exploitation of the land and general agricultural uses, as well as to take in hand the construction of hydro-electrical stations and the first stages of electric lighting (for instance, in Addis Abeba).

This development work means the employment of large

numbers of skilled workmen, and in Abyssinia, good, experienced specialists, engineers especially, are in great demand. But such men have no need to leave the Mother Country in order to find remunerative employment. In order partly to satisfy the growing demand, courses are held in many places, in the charge of N.C.O.s and experienced engineers, which are attended by young artisans of intelligence and promise. In this way, unskilled, but seriously minded, workmen, if they take the trouble to learn and apply themselves to their jobs, can earn quick promotion to the higher grades of their profession. A genuine desire to stay in Italian East Africa and gain well-paid employment, if not at once, in the not distant future, is generally not disappointed, since for a variety of reasons Italians are always returning home, and places thus become vacant.

Whether a man is suited for the life in Fascist Africa is a thing which can only be tested on the spot. There are disappointments of every description, especially to those who arrive expecting too much. Each man should be aware that he, as a pioneer endeavouring to make progress in a hitherto uncivilized land, is assuming a hard and difficult task which demands many willing sacrifices. Moreover, he must be prepared to give and take with his compatriots, whom he is bound to meet here on much more intimate terms than at home. And above all—this is the deciding factor—he must be a man of independence, resource, ability, without which no new country can be conquered and no new career successfully adopted.

'THE DESERT AND THE NIGHT ARE OUR FRIENDS.'

Is it possible for Europeans to understand the natives? Are white men who live among them for years bound to become—as it is jokingly said—half-Africans, lonely men of the desert, who preferably dream away life in idleness, with the sun and the stars their only companions?

Men less poetically inclined frequently enter into fatherly affectionate terms with the natives who serve them so loyally

and patiently. Italian Blackshirt officers told me enough to convince me of the unflinching loyalty and spirit of sacrifice of a large section of the native subjects. Involuntarily, during the course of such conversations, I could not help thinking of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. At the same time, if a true general picture is to be obtained, one should, in addition to these touching stories of loyalty and devotion, take into account also those which tell of the numerous, major and minor, villainies and barbaric customs of the African native population.

Experiences, gained during and subsequent to the war have taught that the natives possess many qualities, mental and physical, which might constitute a source of danger to white men, and that comparative tests of strength in many fields are not advisable.

The rites of the Christian-Coptic Church, the ancient incantations, charms, and love potions, the snake-worshippers and werewolf fables are quite foreign to our way of thinking—as incomprehensible as the various Coptic marriage contracts with their limited validity. In our ears the monotonous singing and dance tunes are unmelodious; and in our eyes Abyssinian paintings are uncivilized and unartistic. Altogether, the whole race, with all its faults and simple virtues, is to us foreign and incomprehensible. In all the cities we seek in vain for monuments of a past or present culture, and where occasionally—as in Gondar and Aksum—we do come across some traces of civilization, these have been left by foreign nations which once invaded the land. The nigger huts, native attire, the method of wearing the hair and the personal ornaments of the Abyssinians are indications of a very inferior type of civilization. The natives are insensitive to physical and mental pain, and they know few feelings of joy. Their preference for consuming raw meat, and the manner in which they eat it, are to us repulsive.

The 'real' Abyssinia, to a certain extent in the primeval African state, is a stranger to us ; possibly for that reason we do not willingly surrender the thin veil of romance which disguises the conception 'Africa.' For that reason we like

to picture the forest feasts, lion hunts, the wailing for the dead, the murmuring of prayers, and the land in which semi-mature girls are surrounded with untiring love.

But in all seriousness I beg—metal the roads, make good caravan paths, inject the cattle, improve the crops, and let every Mohammedan and member of other religions be given an identity card complete with photograph of himself, which he may proudly keep . . . but leave to the children of the Black Continent the magic cloak of night, the brightness of the stars, and vastness of the desert, whose secrets they may continue to possess.

#### THE SEX QUESTION

It is clear that, according to their religion and local customs, the sexual question is one which the natives solve in a very simple way. The Koran permits the Mussulman to marry several women, and the Copts, in order not to lag behind, have a variety of forms of marriage which permit them ample freedom and opportunities for promiscuity. Also, Coptic women are accustomed to marry several times. Incidentally, it may be remarked that their temperament suffers a good deal of damage in this direction owing to an encroachment which all female children suffer when they are still quite young. It is claimed that the climate makes such a measure essential to a woman's well-being.

While the women and girls of Islam generally exercise a very strict reserve, and are guarded by the male members of their family, and are not to be had for money, many Coptic fathers and husbands adopt a different attitude and do not scorn such a source of income.

Prostitution is not regarded as an evil occupation, and all children, whether they be born legitimately or not, are kept by the father—for numerous children, especially if many of them are boys, are looked upon as the height of good fortune.

In these circumstances, any European man living in a place peopled by Amharas or Somalis can, without difficulty or at very great expense, acquire one of the native women, of

whom—quite apart from the ‘professionals,’ whose houses are marked by a red cross, or a small red flag—any number may be had. The Galla women are unapproachable, but among the handsome Somali women there are many prostitutes, despite the fact that their menfolk are of a jealous and masterful nature.

Discounting sexual curiosity, which, to begin with, undoubtedly is often at the root of a white man’s liaison with a coloured woman, the sex problem, as it becomes in the course of time to Europeans living in Africa, has to be considered, not from the erotic side, but from the serious standpoint of necessity. Many doctors are of the opinion that long sexual starvation in an African climate results in damage to the health. That claim is not disputed by many. The subject, therefore, is one which is of present-day importance, and it cannot, as in the case of other questions, and as one would like to see, be disposed of by rules and regulations.

It has long been known that syphilis and the other sex diseases, both hereditary and non-hereditary, are extraordinarily widespread in Abyssinia; it is estimated that 80 per cent of the population is affected. When members of the white races become infected, the symptoms of these diseases are much more serious, and terrible consequences are quickly produced. One sees such figures of horror in the streets of Paris, owing to the fact that France has never taken effective measures for the protection of her white citizens and on account of the large number of coloured soldiers and artistes who come from the colonies to the Mother Country.

In the next chapter it is my intention to speak of the ways and means which Fascist Italy has found, and is vigorously pursuing, for the protection of her white citizens in Italian East Africa.

#### THE PRINCIPAL CITIES IN ITALIAN EAST AFRICA

Addis Abeba, as befits the capital of a country, must take first place, and has already been described separately earlier



in the book. The 'New Flower' deserves, also on account of its area and the number of its inhabitants, its place in the sun.

I should like to follow up with a description of the next most important town ; but the trouble is to know which factors are to be considered of the greatest importance.

By reason of its position as an important railway and trade centre, Diredaaua undoubtedly is very much in the fore, especially now that the fine aerodrome, which is a junction of several air lines, is in use. Large customs sheds and warehouses have been erected in the neighbourhood of the aerodrome and the railway station, and numerous international transport and commercial houses have their branches and agencies here. Hotels of all types and shops make the European quarter appear almost like part of a German town. An important cement works, which is to operate in the near future, has been built on the outskirts of the city. A tall double obelisk on the splendidly laid-out station square commemorates the famous meeting of the North and South Armies, which took place here on 9 May 1936.

Having, so to speak, paid a personal visit to Diredaaua and having occupied, in the great Ghebi of this city, both the room and bed of the last Negus, we will now set out upon the new motor road, which is still in the course of construction, which takes us to Harar, forty-two miles away. Although this road, the only one in a very large area, was put down ten years ago by the last Abyssinian Government, it was in such wretched condition that it was found necessary entirely to reconstruct it.

Harar, the honoured and ancient city of Islam, town of eternal spring, of flowers and delicious fruits, immediately captures us with its magic. Voices which claimed that this was the ideal place for the country's capital did not go unechoed. The damage which Abyssinian marauders caused in the centre of the city in May 1936 was not beyond repair. New business and residential quarters, mosques, and minarets have already been built, and, in addition, place

has been found in the city centre, with its narrow, winding streets, for a picturesque native vegetable market. The former loudly praised model farm, which the Negus maintained beyond the walls of the one-time capital, with their seven age-old gates, was not of much practical value, as it supplied the needs only of his own household.

The Italian Government has now provided a large experimental farm, with fields of corn, cotton, potatoes, and vegetables, and has built a Mussulman college, which one day will be as important an institution as that in Cairo. The Government is also taking a practical interest in the building of new hotels as well as in the small residential settlement which the Director of the Bank of Rome in Harar has built for his employees. Shortly, a large, new Fascist Headquarters is to be built, as the huge, ever-growing membership makes necessary the addition of extra offices and reception-rooms.

Massaua and Asmara, the two well-known and most frequently named cities in Old Eritrea, are actually only separated by a distance of seventy-five miles. However, the difference in altitude, which is as much as 8000 feet, gives them totally different characters. The Port of Massaua on the Red Sea has the hottest climate in the world. Despite that, this extremely important place in the development of Italian East Africa has grown rapidly in the last two years, and there are many Italian residents, who here find remunerative employment in the shipping and transport world and allied occupations. When they want to make the best of a short holiday, they depart for a couple of days for Asmara, visit the cinemas, dance halls, and smart restaurants, stay in one of the new hotels, inspect the new villa quarter (which is built in ultra-modern style), make purchases, and then return to Massaua along the wide, much-used auto-road, leaving behind them the flowers and spring air.

The journey by water from Massaua to Mogadiscio on the Indian Ocean occupies nine days and is not a very enjoyable experience. On the other hand, it is by no means so tiring as the journey by land, and for that reason it is more

popular. And no matter how one may make the journey—by land, sea, or air—a visit to Mogadiscio is so well repaid that almost any sacrifice is worth while in order to see it. This clean and ornamental colonial city possesses numerous villas in the Arab-Moorish style, a fine cathedral and many magnificent buildings along the wide, palm-fringed promenade, where there is always a fresh sea breeze. But unfortunately it is extremely warm here in Somaliland, which, otherwise, would be a veritable paradise.

Those in love never come to an end when they begin to speak of the charms of their chosen ones. That is how I feel about many places on earth. Dessie, Aksum, Gondar, and Cheren in Italian East Africa are cities which will always attract me and whose progress I shall never be tired of watching. But in order not to be unfair to other places, and run the risk of omitting such towns as Dembi Dollo, and Gimma, I prefer to end this chapter, and later, with the assistance of the diary which I kept during my travels, go over the ground more thoroughly.

## CHAPTER II

### AN EMPIRE AND ITS GREAT PROBLEMS

#### HOW ITALY RULES

AS one would have expected, Mussolini is applying to the empire which he created a *politica reale* in the richly suggestive double meaning of this Italian expression. A 'real' policy of construction and economy is gaining much by being at the same time a policy that is *reale*, that is, in English, 'royal.' All laws and decrees go out in the name of the King-Emperor, and the Duce in his present capacity as Head of the Ministry of Italian Africa forwards them to the Viceroy of Italian East Africa, who in his turn sends them further to his subordinates.

Rome governs. Rome is and remains headquarters. Rome keeps guard.

As early as January 1935 the Head of the Italian Government personally took over the portfolio of the Colonial Ministry. War was imminent, and he felt that he must take the highest responsibility. Then, in November 1937, Mussolini again assumed personal control of the *Ministero per l'Africa Italiana*, a ministry which is now of far greater importance than at any other time in the twenty-five years that it has existed. This action is an indication that an important stage has been reached in which development in the colonial empire will enter a new phase.

A vigorous gingering-up process in all spheres of life will be evident *alsbald*, and although previously the greatest endeavours have been exerted, and great works accomplished, there are now signs of the commencement of even bigger efforts. To travel in the new colony at the very time when this change is being brought about, and the Empire

is entering its second stadium, to watch how administration and organization are being directed, and to observe the enthusiasm and zeal of the pioneers, the speed of whose march-step in the 'Empire of Work' could not be beaten even by the fleet-footed Bersaglieri, is one of the most interesting experiences anyone could have at the present time.

The Negus governed old Abyssinia autocratically, and took counsel from the two Chambers, whose members he personally appointed. The different provincial princes sometimes ruled in harmony, but very often they were openly hostile to the Emperor, who frequently deposed them, punished them, and confiscated their property.

To-day, Italian Ethiopia, together with the former Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland, forms one whole. Italian East Africa is divided into five large provinces (*Governatorate*), which themselves are subdivided into numerous areas, large and small, under the administration of commissioners, residents, and vice-residents. (German East Africa was similarly administered in 1890, when the title 'Governor' was first introduced.)

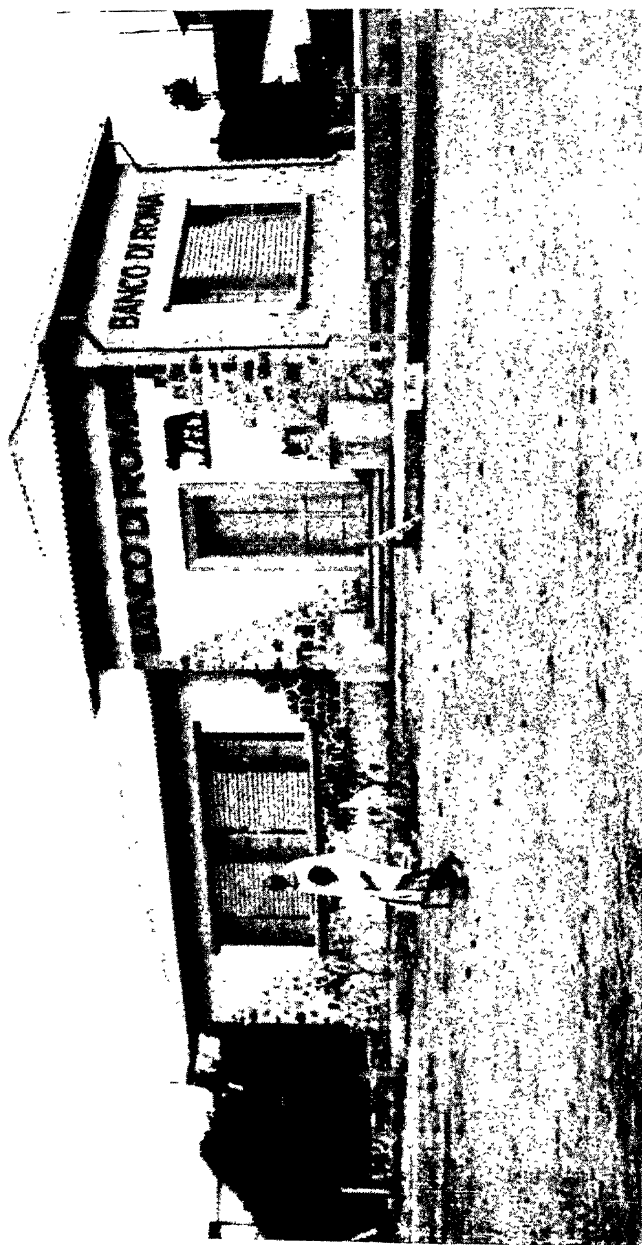
The Governor of Eritrea resides in the capital, Asmara. Under him are eleven commissioners, whose houses are in the principal towns of the province, while residents and vice-residents represent the Governor in the smaller and smallest places. As the Provinces of Eritrea and that of Somaliland (where there are five commissioners) comprised the former Italian colonies, development work here is naturally more advanced than elsewhere.

The three Provinces of Amhara (capital Gondar; five commissioners), Harar (capital Harar; seven commissioners), Galla and Sidam (capital Gimma; twelve commissioners), as well as the independent *Governatorat* of Addis Abeba, in which, incidentally, there are no sub-areas under commissioners, all have their schemes of development well in hand.

The population of Eritrea is composed of Copts and Mussulmans. The Province of Amhara is peopled by



THE MONDAY MARKET IN DESSIE, WHICH IS REGULARLY ATTENDED BY SOME  
30,000 NATIVES



BRANCH OF THE BANK OF ROME IN GONDAR

Amharas, nearly all of whom are members of the Coptic Church. Harar has a strong Islamitic population, but there are also numerous Copts. The population of Somaliland, as well as that of Galla Sidam, is almost entirely Mohammedan.

All five Governors, who govern independently, who can decide upon forms of punishment and introduce changes, but who, of course, are subordinate to the Viceroy of Italian Ethiopia, as well as the Duce (also in his capacity as Colonial Minister) and the King-Emperor, are constantly making tours of inspection, and are continually summoning their commissioners to report. A similar picture is obtained when one visits one of the numerous residents, who are responsible for their own sub-areas, the vice-residents and for maintaining proper control over the natives of their area. In the course of their duties, among which is the highly important function of presiding over the native court once or twice weekly, they often come into close contact with the senior military officer, who, according to the importance of the place, may hold any rank from captain to general. There is hardly need to point out that a certain degree of collaboration between the civil and military authorities is absolutely essential, and that they must keep each other informed of the activities of their particular departments in order that all matters may be considered from every point of view.

It is for that reason that representatives of the civil authority and representatives of all branches of the Services are members of what is known as a 'General Council,' which constitutes a sort of local parliament. There is, further, a special commission, at present appointed by the Viceroy for a period of two years, which is composed of members of this General Council, the Secretary General, Italian citizens, and native dignitaries. For practical reasons the regional commissioners and residents appoint in many cases district and village chiefs, who thereafter hold a place of special importance among the natives, and they permit so-called 'Judges of the First and Second Courts' to remain in office. Appropriate payment is made, and decorations are frequently bestowed.



The *Carabinieri* (*gendarmes*) are also recruited from the natives. Young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four are selected and are put through a three months course of practical and theoretical instruction, which include Italian, riding, and games, after which they don their hand some uniforms and take up a post somewhere in the colony. They have proved very satisfactory. In October 1936 Viceroy Graziani expressed high appreciation of the dependability and useful activities of the first hundred and twenty *Carabinieri*, who were able to relieve the partly mechanized Italian Colonial Police of much work.

Besides the Italian language, which is the official one, in each province the two principal languages of the people who live in them are also recognized—e.g. Tigrinic and Amharic in Eritrea and Hararic and the Galla tongue in Harar, and so on. In addition, Arabic is a compulsory subject in schools in all Mohammedan districts.

The widespread net of the administrative apparatus is supervised by about a hundred and forty high representatives of the civil and military authorities. Colonial counselors (*Consulente coloniale*), who represent the corporative State and constitute the source of liaison between motherland and colonial development in Italian East Africa, are at their disposal for advice, and they examine the many thousand inquiries which come from firms and private individuals, and forward the most important to the appropriate departments.

The burden of work which rests upon the African Ministry in Rome and the *Governatorate* and their sub-divisions in Italian East Africa has increased to such an extent—and there has been no corresponding increase in the staff of officials—that it would be impossible to carry on efficiently without the assistance of the advisory bodies furnished with State powers, which have recently been formed. Schools, health services, public works, agriculture, road-building, communications and transport, economic questions—all these things are the business of the colonial administration, which is held responsible for seeing that their progress does not stand still.

Continued progress has only been made possible by dividing the principal departments among seven main sections, responsible for political, civil, and economic affairs, communications, work (Work Section of the Fascist Militia and Social Duties), colonisation, and finance, which now also enjoy the support of the previously mentioned, new-formed advisory bodies.

As successful commander of the South Army, Marshal Graziani was later entrusted with the office of Viceroy of Italian East Africa, which, thanks to thirty years' experience in all questions of colonial policy, he brilliantly filled. In possession of the highest decorations and honours, and with the hereditary title of Marchese di Neghelli (it was at Neghelli that Graziani gained the decisive victory), this outstanding and popular officer terminated, in September 1937, a dazzling career, of which there is probably no parallel in Italian history.

His successor in this high office is Duke Amadeus of Savoy, Duca di Aosta, not yet forty years old, who has entered upon his task with so much zeal and skill that great hopes have been placed in him. His 'unforgettable and incomparable master in things African,' as the Duke of Aosta described Graziani in a telegram, undoubtedly exerted a powerful influence on the colonial career of this gifted, highly courageous and enterprising 'Prince of the Sahara,' as he has been called since his Sahara expedition, and the new success is another of his splendid achievements. The personal friendship between these two men can be seen from the fact that the Duke was a witness at the marriage of Marshal Graziani's daughter in the autumn of 1937.

The native population takes pride in being under the direct leadership of a member of the Italian Royal House and in the addresses which the Duke frequently makes them. On his arrival the Duke of Aosta was received everywhere with indescribable enthusiasm. Triumphal archways were erected, flowers were strewn in his path, the priests under their gold and silver umbrellas turned out in force, native chiefs in their splendid robes came out, the bells were rung,

and salutes of guns were fired—in Africa, too, they know how to stage their fête days (as Mussolini and the world previously discovered during the rejoicings in Tripoli) and then settle down to work again with zest and vigour.

Immediately after his arrival, the new Viceroy, who had been furnished with exceptional authority, was able to pronounce a number of amnesties and grant compensation to native families in Eritrea and Somaliland who had lost members in the war. Further, subjects of these two provinces in consideration of their long-maintained loyalty, were given permission to use in future the official descriptions, 'Eritrean' and 'Somali.'

The Governors at once took opportunities of reporting to the new Viceroy, and the latter immediately afterwards, without the loss of a single week, set out upon his first inspection tours of the country. At this *Bersaglieri* pace, he continues to advance. Soon the Duke of Aosta will have visited also Somaliland, Mogadiscio, and the 'Duke of Abruzzi's Village,' where, nearly two decades ago, he visited its distinguished founder and accompanied him on an expedition.

One of Graziani's last important duties before relinquishing his office was the solemn installation of the Abuna, for the first time independently elected by the Abyssinian priesthood, who—when separation from Alexandria had been concluded—would be their leading church dignitary. The Coptic priests of Italian East Africa, who have about four million followers, made use of every means of conveying their gratitude, and of expressing their loyalty, to Italy, who, in contrast to the old days, had put their churches in repair, and was building them new ones; who had respected their church ceremonies and provided the priesthood with material support. The man who in 1930 crowned the last Negus had assured Graziani of his loyalty to the new regime, and, as customary on all ceremonial occasions, stood at his side at the distribution of alms in February 1937, when an attempt was made on the life of the Viceroy. He owed his own life to a lucky chance. Graziani, for his part, was not fatally

injured, but he had to undergo an operation in which three hundred and fifty small alien bodies were removed from his leg.

Nationalization of the Coptic Church has now been accomplished, and the ritual oath which new bishops of the Abyssinian Church have taken before the Viceroy is now regarded as valid.

The Abyssinian National Church has now been given its own language and own responsibility, a Government action which must be considered as of great political importance. It is an action after the pattern of Mussolini's clever policy in the Near East, which is displaying strong friendship to Islam, the third greatest religion in the world. If Copts and Mohammedans in Italian East Africa, and the African races living close to the frontiers of the Italian colonial Empire, wish his policy well, the future will look rosy.

Rome rules with Islam. And at the same time the Roman Empire is bearing the Cross of Christ in the world, as the Apostolic Legate proclaimed when he brought the Pope's blessings to Italian East Africa.

Rome relies on its armed forces on land, sea, and in the air. Regularly, troops are arriving in Italy from East Africa, and fresh units are constantly being sent out. Mussolini frequently inspects the men before departure, and the Italian Crown Prince is at Naples to see them off. Press and public take the greatest interest in the Services, and also in the Blackshirts, who continue to send many battalions to Italian East Africa.

Rome places its trust in Fascism, to which it owes its renaissance and the conquest of its empire.

Rome is anchored to the mighty work of one man, borne by his will, formed in his spirit, and produced by his strength—so rules Italy.

#### OUR BLOOD SHALL NOT BE MIXED

Italy had practically no cause before the foundation of the Empire seriously to consider racial questions. It is true that many hundreds of thousands of Italians lived in Egypt,

Tunis, and other countries with a native population, but the number of mulattos of whom Italians were the fathers was extremely small. In Eritrea and Somaliland, too, the problem was one of very small importance, because the number of white people living there was very limited, and in Libya the Mohammedan religion and traditions erected an effective barrier against racial intermingling.

However, the Abyssinian campaign started the stone rolling, and the urgent need of counteracting a threatened danger was recognized. Anyone who has taken a serious interest in critical colonial problems, and studied them from the European angle, knows that this is by no means easy, and that 100 per cent results are not to be expected.

Immediately following the assumption of power in Abyssinia, decrees were issued forbidding marriages, or similar relations, between Italian citizens and native subjects of the new colonial Empire, under pain of severe penalties. On 19 April 1937 the following was made law :

"The Italian citizen who in Empire territory or in the colonies entertains conjugal relations with a subject of Italian East Africa, or with a foreigner who belongs to a race, which in respect of traditions and customs, and in social aspects, resembles the former, will be punished by one to five years penal servitude."

Thus, neither the Italian soldier, nor workman or other Italian citizen is allowed to marry, or live with, a native woman. Further, every Italian is strictly forbidden to take any woman of foreign race into his home. In all large places, a sharp watch is kept in this direction, and in all the smaller ones everyone automatically keeps a watch on his neighbour.

Italian soldiers in 1935 went lightheartedly to war and sang of the 'Little Black Face,' the *Faccetta nera*, whom they were shortly to bring a new king and a new set of laws. No other thoughts—save pleasant ones—troubled them.

But very soon, in the summer of 1936, articles of warning and enlightenment, few at first, began to appear regularly

in the Italian Press. ' . . . Fascism protects the race and tries to keep it pure. The Italian nation possesses qualities which should not be allowed to become general property. . . . One ought to warn the Italian workmen who are in East Africa against mixing with the natives. The latter would be capable of injuring, physically and morally, the wonderful race which created the Empire. The Italians' task of producing peace in Abyssinia is an entirely different matter to racial intermingling. . . . We must count ourselves lucky not to see coloured people in the streets, as is the case in other places. . . . In Italy there is only room for us white Italians and our blood must not be mixed. . . . People who have not lived in the colonies have no idea what a pest the half-castes are. They are loathed alike by white men and natives, and they themselves hate both.'

Great colonial politicians, scholars of repute, and experienced colonists wrote in this manner, and everyone knew that the Colonial Minister, Signor Lessona, following directions from Mussolini, was holding the reins in a firm hand and introducing energetic measures.

Among the many new laws which affect all spheres of life in Italian East Africa were a number of decrees, regulating the racial question, which were necessary in the interests of progress.

In former days, as already mentioned, there was no particular cause for worry in this direction in Eritrea, but in the summer, 1937, the Governor of this Province found it necessary to pronounce a decree whereby, in his area, too, cohabitation between Italians (who were now far more numerous in the country) and natives was absolutely prohibited. Foreigners of European race were also forbidden to live in the native quarters of the towns and in native villages in the surrounding districts. Further, the natives are not allowed to let accommodation in the native quarters and villages to Italians and foreigners.

Decisions of this nature at the same time represent preventative measures of the kind also taken by the Governor of Somaliland, who has made it an offence for citizens of

Italian birth to visit public resorts which are conducted by natives. It is everywhere forbidden in Italian East Africa that natives should be conveyed together with Italians in the same lorry or bus, with the exception of Askaris (native soldiers), who hold a special permit signed by their sector commander, and native workmen who are engaged in the same work as Italians. Nor may natives travel in public buses in which there are Italian passengers, and, in addition, all Italian motor drivers are prohibited from taking service with natives to act as their chauffeurs.

All decrees which govern the relations between native subjects and members of the white race have been cleverly worded, so that the layman, who is unfamiliar with legal jargon, often misses their deeper meaning and fails to understand their ultimate purpose. He reads that a white woman who marries a non-Italian sacrifices her nationality, and that her children—that is the half-castes—naturally lose it, too. No law prevents the half-caste from going to Italy, but as he needs for this purpose a special permit, which is only granted in exceptional cases, the position becomes clear. Regarded as subjects of Italian East Africa are all persons who have their place of residence in Italian East Africa and are not Italian citizens or citizens of another State; those whose fathers were subjects; women who have married subjects, etc. . . . Subjects of Italian East Africa cannot acquire the property of a foreign citizen or an Italian, unless they have resided at least a year abroad and unless they have also secured a special permit from the Colonial Minister. . . .

All the decrees read harmlessly and yet they follow strictly the principle of racial segregation and of collaboration without intermixing. A very sharp distinction is drawn between Italian citizens and colonial native subjects. The Italian woman who marries a native subject knows that she is automatically considered as such, and sacrifices her Italian citizenship.

It is bound to be seen that all laws and measures of precaution would be futile if an insufficient number of white women were not prevailed upon to settle in East Africa. In

the long run, only the family and family life can remove the danger of racial intermingling and ensure successful development of the Empire.

Racial politics and plans of settlement touch each other, and the faster colonization progresses, the smaller the racial peril becomes.

Mussolini has given enormous encouragement to settlement in Italian East Africa, with the result that it has already been possible to put large plans into execution. We will now proceed to make their acquaintance.

#### ITALIAN SETTLEMENT POLICY

The Fascist Government, when bringing forward its colonial claims, has always explained that to Italy, as an over-populated country, the colonial question is not a matter of power politics, or bred of any wish to govern native kingdoms, but a problem of finding room and a means of livelihood for a nation which is increasing to the extent of approximately four hundred thousand people a year.

England and France have shown little understanding for this point of view. Neither country knows this difficult problem and consequently cannot estimate its importance and seriousness. France's lack of population and decline in birth-rate are so well known that there is no need again to comment upon them in connection with the meagre French surface layer which *la France d'outre-mer* can only show.

In the British African colonies (not reckoning South Africa and the mandated areas), which comprise nearly two million square kilometres, there are 17 million natives and only about 3300 white people. The Sudan possesses a native population of 5,500,000, but there are not more than a couple of hundred white men, including many Orientals. In such circumstances, is it possible any longer to speak of a 'colony,' which, the dictionary tells us, is a 'settlement and land for emigrants'? Or are we seriously to recognize that the original conception of the colonial idea has suffered a strong moral decay?



Italy can, and genuinely desires to, colonize, and immediately war was over made corresponding preparations and explorations in Italian East Africa. But in order to guard individual citizens from departing unacquainted with, and unprepared for, African conditions, and so possibly bring ruin to their livelihoods and disaster to their families, a strict control was exercised from the very commencement, and millions of Italians—yes, 'millions' is the right word—who could hardly wait, were for the time being prevented from emigrating.

These people in their simple minds thought, 'The great country of Abyssinia is now Italian, so we can travel out and start "something" over there.' Often enough I personally have heard such opinions expressed. No one seemed to grasp that the first essentials—roads, houses, water, communications—were still lacking, and had first of all to be created by Italian soldiers and workmen. Furthermore, there were very few who seriously considered, from the health, moral, and economic sides, whether they were suitably equipped for the life. All they wanted was to start, begin the new life.

When would they be able to make a start? All Italy wanted to know the answer. Those who wanted to emigrate 'for ever,' and others who wanted to stay at least for several years or whose purpose was primarily to find out what things were like over there, were the most impatient of all. In every Genoese there was something of an undiscovered Columbus, and there was not a Florentine who did not dream of Amerigo Vespucci. When would they be allowed to go?

The answer cannot be supplied in a few words. The main lines of the settlement programme have been decided, and it is now known into which three important groups colonization will be divided.

The first group comprises the so-called industrial concessions with large areas of land (from 1250 to 7500 acres), which for economic reasons are being placed with Italian capitalists for the planting of cotton, coffee, linseed, etc.

These areas will be cultivated exclusively by natives under Italian supervision.

The second group will belong to all farmers who out of their own capital acquire a smaller piece of land, from 125 to 375 acres, for the production of grain, vegetables, fruit, etc.

The third group will consist of the 'demographic,' that is the group settlements, which to begin with will be worked on the collective basis. Later the land will be distributed among the separate families, whose property it will remain.

In all three sections men who took part in the war are to be given preference, and colonists who prove to be unsuited or undeserving will lose their concessions.

The practical execution of this great plan will proceed gradually and systematically as the economic exploitation of the country will allow. Neither fixed times nor fixed numbers have been either determined or envisaged, for the simple reason that to-day it is quite impossible to arrive at any definite conclusions about such matters. (Someone has written that by 1940 five million white people will have settled in Italian East Africa. We are bound to regard that estimate with considerable scepticism.)

In November 1937 the Italian Press published information indicating which requests should be directed respectively to the Ministry of Italian East Africa, the *Governatorate* in Italian East Africa and the *Governatorat-General*, as each of these authorities deals with different types of occupations and groups of settlers. Thousands of inquiries are received, and, as anyone can judge, a considerable time elapses before they can be separately answered.

All the same, numerous settlements were occupied in 1937, though their number may not have corresponded with expectations.

Here and there—e.g., in Harar—soldier-farmers have succeeded in acquiring land concessions from the Italian State, and they are soon to be joined by their families. In February 1938 plans were sufficiently advanced to enable 150 farmers from the South Italian Province of Puglia to settle in the fertile country of Cercer, not far from Asba

Littorio. First they were to erect their own houses and then commence farming, it being arranged that they would be joined by their families as soon as provision has been made for their accommodation and sustenance. Another 250 heads of families were due to follow a little later.

These are examples taken from the second and third groups of the colonization system, which in favourable circumstances will enable hundreds of thousands of Italians, notably small farmers, to make their homes in Italian East Africa.

Good results have already been obtained through the settlement of regional collective groups in newly built towns in the fertile, reclaimed area near Rome, in which numerous peasant families were transplanted *en masse*, and where they are rapidly and permanently taking root again. The splendid family life which unites the countryman and his family, and all that it means, is of vast importance to the Italian, and for that reason mass settlement is the happiest and most promising solution that Fascism could possibly have found. That being so, one can only applaud the decision to settle 400 peasant families from the Romagna in the Province of Amhara (in an area known as the *Romagna di Etiopia*), a similar number from Venice at Gimma in the Province of Galla Sidama, and—as has already been mentioned—a further 400 families from Puglia in the Province of Harar. It is the first time in the history of empire building that such far-seeing methods, interpreting in the truest sense the term 'colonial,' have been employed.

The young Fascist Movement has in many directions devised new methods and set up new organizations, which have more than justified their creation, and in consequence already enjoy traditional rights. Among such organizations a prominent place is occupied by the National Association of ex-Servicemen, composed of men who fought in the Great War. Signor Mussolini has set aside a large area of the reclaimed land near Rome on which members with large families are being settled.

This National Association is also to found large agricultural

settlements in Italian East Africa, which will be occupied by groups of Italian peasants. It has already studied conditions in two small places a few miles from Addis Abeba, namely Biscioftu and Oletta, and has made all preparations for their development. On 9 December 1937 the foundations were laid of the first hundred houses—eighty in Oletta and twenty in Biscioftu—in an area of 15,000 acres, in blocks of eight houses. At the same time 3000 hectares of corn were harvested. There was great satisfaction in finding that the first trial crops of European and African grain yielded from 15–30 cwt. (in Germany over 40 cwt.) to the hectare. A further 20 hectares produced a good crop of vegetables, which were sent to the capital. The first hundred families were to arrive in the autumn of 1938, though several of the fathers had already been working there for a considerable time.

Although a family settlement, consisting of 125–150 acres, including a house, costs on the average 750 lire, this is a financial burden of which the colonists should soon be able to free themselves. During the first years the Association is to provide certain support and take a share in the expenses. It is calculated that in five or six years a family should be able to free itself from all financial obligations, whereupon it becomes the owner of the land. At the same time, ex-Servicemen will continue in touch with their Association, and continue to enjoy certain privileges which membership affords.

Against a modest wage the farmers can employ native labourers living in the districts near Oletta and Biscioftu. New *tukuls* are being erected for them on the outskirts of the two settlements, a decision which from many points of view seems the most practical one.

There is no doubt that in the course of time the ex-Servicemen's Association will start other agricultural group settlements. The President of the Association, Signor Arnaldo di Crollalanza, who pays two visits a year to Italian East Africa, and follows every stage in the developments there, very properly declared that first of all roads and towns

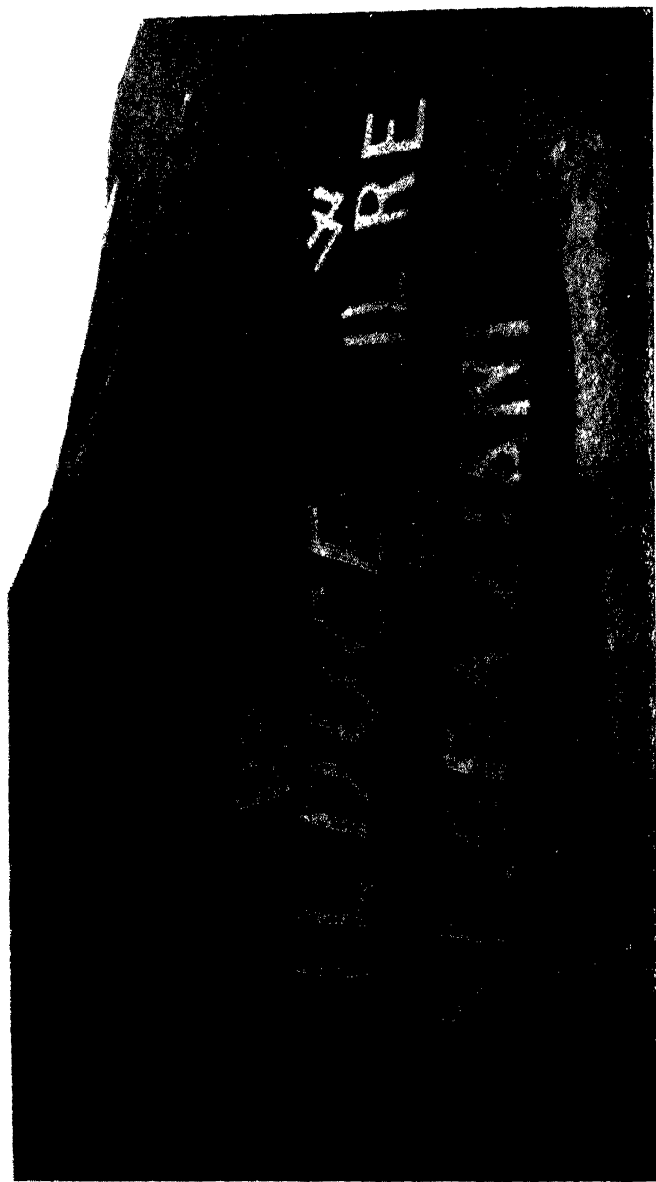
must be created and the nature of the soil in the various districts examined ; until that has been done his Association is not proposing to make further positive local plans. Numerous agricultural settlements will in the near future undoubtedly find a home in the fertile zones of Western Abyssinia, and so do their share—and this is the ultimate aim of this Association—in making the Empire independent and self-supporting on the question of food supplies.

The most important matter to be decided before new settlements can be definitely planned is whether a sufficiency of suitable land and soil is available. We have already touched upon this by no means simple problem and have mentioned that the large estates of the Coptic Church were taken over by the State, and that the Church continues to occupy them on a ten years' lease. The great possessions of the Negus and the hostile princes were also confiscated as State property, and the Italian Government now has them at its disposal. Besides this rich landholding, the Italian Government in East Africa has also taken over large land areas (e.g. at Cercer, where the farmers from Puglia now have their settlement) from natives who formerly lived there, but have now permanently left the district. Further to that, there is the fact that in many places, as, for example, in Mohammedan Harar, many natives are only too willing to surrender their property for cash payments ; such properties also become State possessions and are available for purposes of colonization. In general the natives of Abyssinia are accustomed to regarding land as State property and are for the most part unfamiliar with private ownership of land as we know it. Despite that, they feel close ties with the soil which bears and feeds them.

Italy respects all well-founded claims, though that is a matter difficult to ascertain, especially as there are very few title-deeds which were not destroyed in the devastation which raged in the spring of 1936. Further, it has been discovered that, out of 30,000 property owners, only 3900 were on the books of the land-registry office, and that only about a



NATIVE LOOKING AT A SHOW-CASE CONTAINING A  
VARIETY OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF MUSSOLINI



Throughout Italian East Africa soldiers and workmen have left huge inscriptions  
by the roadside, honouring the King-Emperor, the Duce, and the Viceroy

hundred owners regularly paid taxes. It will take some time before all the title-deeds, or anything corresponding to these, can be collected and a new register of landed property be compiled. Concessions granted by the Negus are also being looked into, and for the future the comparatively trivial ones can be regarded as belonging to the Italian Government.

In Italian East Africa they are already considering the practicability of creating certain reserves for definite groups of natives, not only because the latter are more than inclined to live as nomads, but also for internal political reasons. In any case such zones, even if the natives were allowed to administer them independently, would be handed to the Italian Government in the event of renunciation. The Government is endeavouring by every means to arouse a desire to work in the natives, who have let about two-thirds of the land go uncultivated, and has placed at their disposal large quantities of grain seed of all descriptions. In August 1937 nearly eighteen tons of seed were distributed.

Italian settlement in East Africa marches hand in hand with development in all the other spheres. There is no need here to examine the many different tasks and problems, of which the telegraph and telephone services, canalization, the erection of administrative buildings and the organization of measures of military defence represent only a few. But mention must be made of the organizing of water supplies, upon which man, beast, and crops are dependent, especially as in many places this constitutes a very urgent problem. The creation of elementary, secondary and high schools for Italian children is a matter which should also be mentioned here. The aim is to do everything possible to create comfortable living conditions for those newly married couples whose children will first see light in the new home, grow up there and build homes for themselves. One can imagine the joy in a village when the first Italian child is born there and the leading official or senior military officer attends the christening as godfather.

The land which the fathers conquered by the sword is now



being conquered by the plough, that it may become a permanent home for a growing nation.

#### ROMAN ROADS IN THE FASCIST EMPIRE

We have already had some glimpse of the great sacrifices in human life, effort, and money, which were claimed in the construction of roads and bridges. Now some attempt should be made to study this work from the viewpoint of the autonomous Road-building Administration and to regard it in the light of the far-reaching importance which the Duce attaches to it and in which his Labour Minister sees it.

By 30 June 1938 2500 kilometres of the *Reichsautobahnstrassen* (German motor-roads) had been completed in Germany. In Italian East Africa 3420 kilometres of Roman roads, with an average width of 28 feet, were ready by the same date. That is an achievement which must arouse universal admiration. It is an achievement the more remarkable when one thinks of the difficulties and complications added to this already hard work by the climate, mountainous nature of a great part of the country, transport problems and, not least, the often treacherous nature of the soil, which in Italian East Africa had been scarcely explored and whose substratum often provided some highly unwelcome surprises.

Even during the recent campaign troops were forced to build roads—as well as it was possible to build them in the circumstances—before the Army could advance. Soon after the war ended the rainy season started, and so it was not until autumn, 1936, that work could be taken up on a large scale. Despite that, 1440 miles of roads were ready by June 1937, and in the next twelve months a further 750 miles were opened to traffic. The following is a list of the most important Empire roads, which have either been completed, or which are at least open to traffic for a certain stretch :

From north to south :

	Length in Km.	Open to Traffic.	Un- tarred.	Tarred
Massaua-Asmara . . .	116	the whole	—	116
Asmara-Addis Abeba . . .	1100	„ „	250	800
Nefasit-Decamere . . .	40	„ „	—	40
Assab-Dessie . . .	510	„ „	110	140
Asmara-Tessenei-Sabderat . . .	385	„ „	255	130
Asmara-Gondar . . .	550	„ „	180	370
Addis Abeba-Gimma . . .	353	„ „	120	100
Addis Abeba-Lekemti . . .	336	200 km.	90	110
Dessie-Magdala . . .	30	the whole	30	—
	3420	3284 km.	1035	1806
Approx. number of miles . . .	2138	2053	647	1129

Thus 95 per cent of these roads are open to traffic ; 85 per cent, or 1775 miles, are finished ; 55 per cent, or 1129 miles, are tarred.

Each one of these roads is of vital importance in the opening up of the country, but it follows that the one which connects Asmara with Dessie and Addis Abeba represents the main artery without which the whole system would be of little use. That is a reason why this road, also in technical construction, takes pride of place. We must not lose sight of the fact that it would not be possible by the summer of 1938 for all the above-mentioned roads to be complete models of perfection ; nevertheless, they will be open to traffic. Work on all stretches will continue without pause, and it is probable that the 3000 million lire (approx. £33,000,000), which were voted for road-building purposes will be exhausted in four years, counting from 1936. Quite apart from the large sums which are spent in wages and transport, the cost of the building materials themselves accounts for a large part of the expenditure.

From December 1936 to December 1937 119,200 tons of cement and 7200 tons of iron were used, 125 miles of railway track (for transport purposes) were laid, and 3440 small open railway trucks were employed in the transport of the material. In addition, 58,000 vehicles, 241 petrol-driven rollers, 527 stone-breaking machines, 90 concrete

mixers, 193 tar-spraying machines, and 316 hand-rollers were used on the work. In the days of the Negus there was not even a single hand-roller in the whole land.

Abyssinia itself is twice as large as Germany, and until to-day knew nothing but sandy caravan tracks and dried-up river-beds—these during the non-rainy season. How much, and yet how little, do the first real roads—to which numerous others are to be added—mean to this country. In order to obtain some idea of the inhospitableness of the routes which formerly connected places of minor traffic importance, it is sufficient to consider that a motor column, which left Diredaoua on 16 December 1937 to explore the route for the new road between Harar and Assab, did not arrive at Assab until 6 January.

This harbour town in the Dankali territory provides the road-builders with climatic and technical problems of extreme difficulty. The road now in the course of construction is being created out of the cruelly hard lava rock which abounds in this barren area. Day after day, white and native workmen struggle with this unwilling material, which rapidly ruins the best of tools. Is it necessary to state that the casualty lists of 'Heroes of Work' (up to 31 January 1938 the number of fatalities is given in Italian East Africa as 632 and in Italy as 345) are constantly receiving additions? But there is no lack of new recruits from the Motherland, where men are only too anxious to enrol. Africa calls! The double wage is an attraction, and men who work in altitudes below 3000 feet or above 9000 feet get additional payment. Most of the men are young. Married men send the bulk of their wages to their families at home. In this way enormous sums, hard earned in hard conditions, find their way back to the Mother Country.

More and more roads are being built. The question is being asked, "When will Mussolini come and see our work?" A short while ago he opened the nearly 1200 mile road between Egypt and Tunis—here they are building him roads of rock, crossing the dead, never-ending plain and silent desert.

If we again take up the map, and cast our eyes upon the southern part of Italian East Africa, we observe many roads, of first-class and second-class importance, which are still waiting to be finished. In Somaliland the motor roads have only been tackled for comparatively short stretches, and the towns of Gimma, Lekemti, and Dembi Dollo, which stand at the three corners of a triangle, have still to be linked up by road.

Wherever we look, we discover places which are more or less cut off. Since the end of the war rapid and regular communications have been maintained by military and postal aircraft; but that in the long run is not enough, despite the fact that civil aviation has made great strides since the spring of 1937. Even the route Asmara-Assab is regularly flown by the *Ala Littoria* company, which conveys passengers and food supplies, and, of course, Asmara, Addis Abeba, Diredaau, Mogadiscio, and the other important trade centres have their regular air services.

As far as plans for extending the railway system in Italian East Africa, which at present covers only 668 miles, are concerned, and which were the subject of lively discussions in the summer of 1936, it must be admitted that there has not been very much said about the matter since then. One neither reads, hears, nor sees anything that would lead one to conclude, to take an example, that the railway line connecting Assab with Dessie and Addis Abeba will soon be an accomplished fact. Nor does the north-west line (Addis Abeba-Ascanghi-Macalle-Asmara), as well as the one which is to run parallel to the road from Addis Abeba to Dessie and Gondar, thus connecting with the line from Cheren to Asmara, appear to be in the programme of the day. Undoubtedly, the 'Middle-West Line,' which would cross the rich Uollega territory with its deposits of gold and platinum, would be of great economic importance—but that plan, too, does not appear to be mature at present.

Italy is anxious not to overstrain her sons and consequently is restricting herself, where communications are concerned, to the by no means small task of providing numerous main

roads and of constructing a very large number of aerodromes.

Is there any old African colony, I ask, which can measure its achievements with those of the young Italian Empire when it comes to the laying out of new roads? Is there a nation which, in so short a time, has made such sacrifices on behalf of its colonies?

TO WHAT EXTENT IS ITALIAN ETHIOPIA IN A POSITION TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF THE MOTHER COUNTRY?

'Who has run the danger of being strangled by the noose of an economic war knows what to think and how to act. . . .'

MUSSOLINI, 16 May 1937.

A nation which, like Italy, places at the service of its colonial Empire its best men and best gifts, is justly entitled to consider those claims of the Motherland which African soil is able to satisfy. As this Empire was taken over in May 1936, a territory unexploited and uncultivated, there was indeed little to be expected from it in that direction. First of all the Italian Government—it is a problem which can be expressed quite simply—had to sow in order to reap; nothing was being given away. That was a matter requiring careful preparation. It has been necessary to keep a strict watch on all economic activities at home and in the Empire, in order that all requirements of the people—those in Italy as well as those in the colony, which aims to be self-supporting in the matter of food—might be met.

During the Abyssinian War, and in the days which followed, Italy was obliged to make tremendous exertions in order to meet the huge demands which the undertaking exacted of the country. There could be no question of compensation in any direction. Whether this stadium has already been passed, and whether to-day some small amount of compensation can be noted, is less a question of statistics than interpretation. There is no denying that many former unemployed are now earning their living in Africa and at the same time maintaining their families in Italy, that all the

industries, owing to the enormous demands of East Africa have experienced a big revival, and that shipping is now busier than it has been for a very long time—indeed, it can be justly claimed that the African undertaking is having many beneficial effects. But these are not yet of a self-supporting nature, for supply sources of a productive kind are not immediately available to meet the growing demand and increased consumption.

Italy's aim is to be independent and self-supporting in all matters, an endeavour which the Duce encourages in every possible way. All forces of the Empire are being strained to achieve in the highest degree (*a*) close collaboration between Italy and the colonies, (*b*) the independence of both from other countries, (*c*) independence of East Africa from the Motherland.

With regard to the first point, co-operation of the Motherland and the colonies, that is already in full swing. In accordance with Fascist principles, industrial initiative in Italian East Africa is being allowed ample scope. Of the seventeen large concerns which had been launched by February 1938 twelve are concerned exclusively with the delivery of raw materials. They do not form a syndicate of a monopoly character ; their activities are more or less competitive.

The more successful their work, the sooner will it be possible to materialize the second point in the self-sufficiency programme, which, in rendering the Italian Empire independent of the rest of the world, is its most important part. There is no doubt whatsoever that this aim, which is the chief purpose of the six-year plan, will be achieved, if it is at all capable of realization (this is a question of soil fertility and not time), by 1942. To make Italy, who has hitherto been dependent upon foreign sources for many raw materials, as well as for cattle, grain, and numerous other essential supplies independent of the rest of the world, simply means that the Empire must in future provide the Motherland with everything that it has previously lacked. It is possible that in the agricultural sphere all demands may soon be met.

But whether Abyssinian soil contains sufficient raw materials of all kinds, and whether these materials can be economically worked, is a matter which will be discovered during the next few years, after thorough scientific and technical explorations have been carried out. Here and there voices are already being raised—be it in connection with the presence of copper, iron or gold, or other minerals—which express great hopes and, occasionally, big disappointments. Such views are premature, and those who have given expression to them should have waited ; at least three years are necessary for surveys and tests, if these are to be made thoroughly. At present only partial results are available, but these allow us to draw certain conclusions and form some estimate of the extent to which Italian Ethiopia will be able to meet the Mother Country's requirements in raw material.

The last point in the programme is to-day the most difficult of the three to judge, for the independence of East Africa from the Italian Motherland will be governed to a large degree by the number of Italian settlers and their standard of living in Africa. The natives, for the most part, could provide themselves with enough food. In the past, admittedly, they got little out of the soil, but, on the other hand, their standard of living was on an extremely modest scale. They neither knew nor used mills, since the womenfolk ground corn by hand. Saw-mills were equally unknown ; if a native wanted timber for building purposes, he felled trees and fashioned them himself. The settlement of hundreds of thousands of Europeans will radically change all this. The demand, not only for grain and meat, but also for manufactured articles such as clothing and boots and shoes, despite the very modest needs of the Italians, in comparison with the completely non-existent needs of the natives where these materials are concerned, will be infinitely greater.

Will the colonial empire once it has been opened up and settled by colonizers, create its own industry and supply its own requirements in industrial products of all descriptions ? Already eight hundred authorized industrial concerns are

operating in East Africa. But this number includes no independent industries which, for example, transform textile fibres, oil seeds, pelts and skins, etc., into finished products. Moreover, in places like Decamere in Eritrea, where motors are absolutely essential as the only means of transport, there has not yet been any attempt to establish a factory for the production of new automobiles. At present, they are content to stock large quantities of spare parts, which are imported from Italy, and maintain workshops for repairs and for the construction of certain special types which are used locally.

Economic independence is still very much in its infancy, as one could only expect in the case of a colonial empire scarcely two years old. But there is little doubt that the local industry, started in 1938, will make rapid progress, and will be able soon to finish those local products, which are better not transported to Italy in their raw state, and, further, supply the national industry with semi-finished articles.

There is a fourth point which, although it is rather outside the major-political and national-economic programme that we have just been examining, should be mentioned here on account of its tremendous importance to the subject of national economy—the question of securing foreign exchange. Italian East Africa, in addition to the tasks which I have outlined, must also build trade bridges to the other countries in the African Continent and to Asia. There is need for a commercial *rapprochement* between Italy and centres of trade in Africa and the Orient. This obligation, which is also of world-economic significance, of course is closely bound up with the development of industry in Italian East Africa. All goods which leave or arrive in Italian East Africa without passing through the Suez Canal save the high duty and are correspondingly cheaper—a factor which would make all the difference in the world market.

In conclusion, we may note the following :

The growing of timber and grass plants, which provide the fibres necessary in the production of cellulose, has now



been going on in Italian East Africa for over a year. . . . In October 1937 the first Italian corn to be sown and cut in Italian East Africa was publicly displayed in a large show-window in Addis Abeba. . . . The great Abyssinian forests are now under protection of the Forestry Militia, which supervises the felling of timber and re-afforestation. . . . In all fertile areas of Abyssinia experimental farms are being planted with various sorts of cotton, oil plants, and those which provide oil with which to supplement the supplies of fuel needed for transport and other purposes. . . . The scientific institutes of Asmara (Eritrea) and Merca (Somali-land) supply the whole of Italian East Africa with serum for the treatment of foot and mouth disease and other animal plagues, thus benefiting the cattle of the country generally. . . . In June 1937 the Mine Inspection Section of the *Governorat-General* commenced its duties. It undertakes various kinds of research work in all parts of the Empire and co-operates with the many, State and semi-State, scientific, geological, and technical societies. . . . Marshal Badoglio has been appointed successor to his Excellency, Marchese Marconi, as President of the 'National Council for Research.' He received the following message from the Duce : 'The National Council for Research is a servant of national self-sufficiency.' . . . In all spheres of life and industry the Empire has the task of achieving in the shortest possible time the greatest degree of independence and, in so doing, providing the best guarantee of peace and an effective bulwark against potential aggressive intentions on the part of richer countries.

#### THE CURRENCY PROBLEM

Like children who know nothing of money, and have no appreciation of its value, the native Abyssinians strenuously resisted Menelik II's attempts to introduce a dollar bearing his image, and they refused to have it in place of the old familiar Maria Theresa dollars, which were minted in Vienna. Moreover, these dollars were not regarded as

'genuine' unless the edge was still bevelled and the Empress's profile, her nose especially, could still be distinctly felt. Handsome new money, whose value the natives believed would never lessen, was popularly hoarded and hidden away. Instead of using it, rifle cartridges, glass beads, scraps of iron, sugar, and salt (in blocks and small packets) were in everyday use, not only as objects of practical utility and as means of payment, but as ideal objects of barter. In exchange for a sewing needle one could get half a dozen small chicks. Trade by barter was prominently in the foreground. Anyone who, for example, had a surplus of homegrown coffee, but wanted corn to make bread, went to market and put off all buyers until the right man turned up. It is not easy to explain to such simple people that the metal value of a coin does not necessarily determine its purchasing power and that for this reason it matters not whether the money is in the form of coin or paper. If one explains this to them, and hopes that in consequence they will henceforth accept paper money as a valid means of payment, they nod their heads and observe: "Yes, but in that case it must be perfectly new, uncreased paper money."

When the Abyssinian War began, Italy herself began to mint Maria Theresa dollars and circulate them in Africa. Almost immediately after Italian troops made their triumphal entry in Addis Abeba, the doors of the Bank of Ethiopia, and those of its branches in Diredaui, Dessie, and Harar, were closed, and financial transactions were taken over by the Bank of Italy and other big banking institutions. For the present (probably for the reason that neighbouring States of Abyssinia acknowledged its purchasing power, and themselves had many millions in circulation) the intention was to allow the dollar to stay, but not to allow it the same privileges as the Italian lira, which certainly had to be introduced in the colonies in order that calculations in international money transactions might be rendered simpler.

On 15 July 1936 the lira was brought in as the official currency, and circulated both in the form of paper and coin,

with the stipulation that the rate of exchange should be regulated from time to time by Government decree. In the beginning it was stabilized at the rate of six lire to the dollar, but only a few months passed before the rate was increased to eight-eleven lire. It was hoped that gradually Maria Theresa dollars, rich in silver content, would be changed into lire, although no one attempted to disguise from himself the many difficulties, especially in country districts, which still remained.

The country people were not in a hurry to change. They still could not grasp the purpose of money, or what the lira was actually worth. They could not understand, for instance, why a fifty-cent piece, which is larger in size than a one-lira coin, should only have half the value, and they were quite unable to understand the causes which were responsible for variations in the rate of exchange. By June 1937, 13.50 lire was being paid for the dollar, though, according to calculations, a silver dollar contains up to 23.40 grammes of silver, which makes it equal in value to 8.97 lire. Thus the demand for dollars remained very lively, and by a decree issued by the *Governatorat-General* banks were allowed to pay, to anyone who asked for them, up to twenty Maria Theresa dollars, but larger amounts only with special authority.

The prices of commodities were, of course, fixed on the lira basis. Accordingly, from March 1937, each family could buy daily 650 grammes of salt for a lira—in the days of the Negus, the same quantity would have cost five times as much. (In Italy the sale of salt is a State monopoly; but in Italian East Africa for the present it is being left in the hands of private enterprise.)

During the year 1937 Italian coins increased their circulation in the big towns, but elsewhere the people stuck to dollars and bartering, and persons when they took their produce to market expected to be paid in the old accustomed manner. Also in city commercial life dollars were still being used considerably, with the result that the Viceroy decreed that Maria Theresa dollars would no longer be considered legal tender in exchange for imported goods.

The loathing of paper lire, of which large sums are in circulation in Italian East Africa, loyalty to the old dollar, which is accepted also in neighbouring states as a valid form of exchange, a childish love for sparkling silver coins, and the numerous opportunities which existed, especially recently, for profitable speculation in the dollar—from all these aspects the currency problem had to be considered. After long hesitation Italy, in January 1938, took the decisive step and brought about the separation of lira and dollar. It was no longer quoted on the money-market, and from that time ceased to interest speculators.

The currency question began in a new stage, which, however, certainly cannot be regarded as the final one. As the people grow more 'Italianized' and as commercial relations with Italy increase, and as practical acquaintance with the lira becomes more familiar, attachment to the dollar will accordingly diminish and the lira will be more generally accepted.

At the present time wage-earners receive their Italian paper money with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion, and their chief concern is to dispose of all notes, which are not brand new, as quickly as possible. They believe that, like beads, bullets, sugar, and salt, money, whether paper or coin, must be faultless—if it is not, then it has not the same value !

#### ROME KNOWS ONLY ONE LAW

There is an Arab proverb which says : 'Justice without the sword is weakness ; the sword without justice is tyranny.'

The natives expect to be treated according to that principle. They would have no respect for their Italian masters if the latter were too easy-going, if they completely abolished old traditional privileges and if they did away with corporal punishment, which is claimed as a 'traditional right.' In so far as it does not offend against the European conception of moral principles, it has been permitted to remain, particularly as experience soon showed that prison sentences were to Abyssinians a very much severer form of punishment, and that they took far longer to recover from

imprisonment than from twenty to forty strokes of the whip, to which they were accustomed, and at which they could still laugh, even after a successful application. Minor offences, in the first place theft, are invariably punished on the spot and generally, as has been the custom, on the market square before the eyes of the people.

Formerly there was no system of justice in the proper sense, although there was in existence a legal code closely resembling the Siamese Lawbook.

In Addis Abeba, only three weeks after the occupation of the city, primitively furnished court-rooms were opened, in which Italian judges dispensed justice according to Italian law. Plans have now been submitted for a large central court of justice.

And so in Italian East Africa justice is dealt out according to Italian laws. Minor punishments ordained by the penal code are, however, not inflicted, as the natives as yet do not fully appreciate the seriousness of many offences. In addition, they have not so far been condemned and punished from the point of view of reform. Italy wants to give encouragement to those minor offenders, whose virtues are more numerous than their faults and who appear likely to become better subjects; and justice is pronounced with that in mind. Milder treatment is also accorded to those in work.

In former times they hanged the petty thieves and let the worst ones go free. According to Italian law, housebreaking can be punished by three years' imprisonment and a fine of two thousand lire; instead of that they are generally given eighteen months for vagabondage and are let off the fine. Placing first offenders on probation is impossible owing to the practical impossibility of discovering the subsequent whereabouts of the delinquents.

Many tribes belonging to the former dominant race are born criminals and have lived all their lives on the proceeds of organized robbery. There is a death sentence for robbery with murder and manslaughter, and anyone caught with firearms, without being in possession of a permit, is gambling with his life.

Most crimes are committed by youths between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. According to Italian law, children under fourteen years of age cannot be committed to prison. But the Abyssinian Code made even children of seven responsible for their misdeeds. The greatest difficulty confronting Italian judges is that of reconciling justice with old-established customs.

Everyday minor offences and infringements of the law, for example, a case of assault in which the victim does not suffer bodily injury, may be dealt with by the native tribunal. Italian judges and magistrates frequently attend these courts in order to learn more about native customs and theories of justice. The President of the Italian Court of Justice in Addis Abeba told me that Abyssinians, though most of them are illiterate, nevertheless think logically and judge fairly.

How close legal connections between Rome and Abyssinia have become is shown by the fact that in February 1938 a Roman barrister flew to Addis Abeba to appear in a complicated and important criminal case before the Central Court. In less than two weeks after his departure, this barrister was able to resume his practice at home, having in the meanwhile successfully pleaded for his clients in a case which occupied four days.

Before the Italian occupation the keeping of criminal records was considered superfluous, for the simple reason that previous offenders were adequately stamped by the thrashings which they had received. These floggings left marks which remained for life, but the previously convicted simply disowned their names and changed them for various others, or moved into a district where no one knew them. Even to-day these circumstances make it very difficult for the Italian authorities to compile criminal records (of those guilty of serious crimes) and are an obstacle in the path of the whole of civil progress; but despite that, everywhere three sets of records are kept, in which Italians, non-Italians, and natives are separately entered.

I have already mentioned that the Viceroy and the five

independent Governors of Provinces are equipped with high-authority and are empowered to grant amnesties and quash convictions. Down to the residents and the old Abyssinian dignitaries, less important decisions, also where territorial questions are concerned, can be taken more or less independently of higher authority. Most of the provisory institutions that have always served native justice are maintained. A city like Addis Abeba is divided into sixteen native quarters, whose chiefs, *Dagnas* and *Uomers*, as they are called, attend to the everyday civil and commercial cases and at the same time give assistance to the Italian police. But for this the police rely chiefly on the *Afasata*, whose services now, as in former times, are always called upon when there is difficulty in obtaining evidence against one or more criminals. As no native will give away another, and all maintain an obstinate silence, even as witnesses, the tactics which the *Afastata* employ are the only ones which achieve practical results. This institution makes a speciality of conducting inquiries, often lasting many days, among large and particular groups of natives at a certain place, in such a way that nobody notices who and what has extracted the incriminating evidence against the culprit; and it must be done in that manner if all and each are to escape vengeance. It is always open to the Governor to intervene in unsettled disputes and himself decide them.

All legal and Fascist principles, as recognized in the home country, will by degrees become established in Italian East Africa. Since the conquest of Abyssinia, in May 1936, new or amended laws and regulations, affecting all points of national life, have been regularly introduced. Moreover, there has been no hesitation in cancelling decisions and readjusting the laws when circumstances made such alterations seem necessary. At the same time, care has been taken in doing this not to meddle with Roman Law as such and the foundations upon which it rests.

Rome has only one law for all, and nothing can alter that! No one should imagine that an Italian national can count upon more lenient treatment than a native subject; on the



ABYSSINIAN PAINTERS' 'STUDIO' IN ADDIS ABEBA





THE SOMALI ASKARI SALADAS, WHO WAS N.C.O. OF THE  
ITALIAN NATIVE GUARD IN UAL-UAL DURING THE CRITICAL  
DAYS IN THE AUTUMN OF 1935

contrary, he will be held to the fullest extent responsible for his misdeeds. In 1937, in Asmara and Addis Abeba, two convictions were made as public as possible, that they might serve as examples.

Several Italian workmen who had robbed and killed, in the one case, Armenians and, in the other instance, natives, were sentenced to death. The Duce rejected all petitions for a reprieve and, indeed, demanded that the murderers should be executed, in the presence of nationals and native subjects, at the scenes of their terrible crimes. He also insisted that representatives of the national and foreign Press should be present in order to have an opportunity of convincing themselves that Rome had only *one* law—for all.

The moral effect of these two sentences was enormous, and especially among the natives. Rome's might and sense of justice filled them with deep respect, and they knew then that there was one law, which would be ruthlessly carried out—a law for all.

#### THE PROGRAMME FOR THE CARE OF HEALTH

Even while the campaign was still on, natives and their children from the occupied areas came to the Italians for medical treatment. Thousands of photographs exist which show how, in numerous instances, private soldiers did their best to administer eye-drops, treat skin complaints with medicine, and generally give advice and practical help. The Abyssinians, who although they possess vitality, and whose powers of resistance when wounded are remarkable, are nevertheless very undernourished and, in consequence, delicate. They are prone to illness, and on the average they do not live much beyond their fortieth year. Few were used to receiving such help. Except those who lived near missions, none had any conception of medical care. Moreover, people at first were often suspicious and continued to lack faith until they received positive proofs of the success and necessity of medical treatment.

Leprosy, syphilis, tuberculosis, and also malaria and other

tropical diseases have for generations been undermining national physique and have been steadily spreading. In fairly recent years, Swedish, American, and Italian missions built leper colonies and hospitals, which the Italian Department of Health is now enlarging and to which others are being added in all parts of the country.

All towns which I visited had their hospital for Italians and a special section for natives. Addis Abeba is divided into eight health districts, which possess not less than three civil and three military hospitals, a hospital for natives, a maternity home, a children's hospital, as well as a polyclinic and five field hospitals. The average number of persons to receive treatment at these travelling hospitals is between fifteen hundred and two thousand a month, and of them approximately 7 per cent become in-patients. Here mention must be made of the hospital opened in June 1937 for Italian workmen, the construction of which was then still proceeding, that by the end of the year took 3361 patients for a total number of 64,974 days between them.

The leper colony at Akaki has been extended ; and not far from Aksum, close to the Asmara-Gondar road, a second is being built, which will later be under the care of the Maltese Order. These few examples will suffice to show what is being done.

The natives everywhere are treated exclusively by Italian doctors ; the native medicine-man is strictly forbidden to practise his activities. European nurses tend nationals, and in each health area there is a native nurse, whose training was formerly in the hands of mission sisters. This nurse visits the sick in their *tukuls*.

General Graziani, who had enjoyed great experience in Libya, set up in 1936 a Hygiene and Aid Committee which undertook the re-organization of sanitary services throughout Ethiopia. In all provinces sanitary inspection departments, in the charge of doctors employed by the Government, were created. They are responsible for the clinics and field hospitals, and often for the authorized houses.

An organization of a similar nature, which ought to be mentioned here, is the important Veterinary Inspection Department, whose surgeons direct veterinary clinics, inspect slaughter-houses and examine meat. I have already referred to the two big institutions in Asmara and Merca which supply anti-foot-and-mouth disease serum, but it would take us too far to name all the various departments which are responsible for the control of public resorts and food stores, as well as the very numerous laboratories which serve so many useful purposes.

Compulsory vaccination, disinfection (also by means of transportable disinfection stations), preventative measures of all kinds (among these are the cleansing and purifying of wells and water systems), the establishment of authorized houses with native and white women, and, not the least important, the distribution of preventative and healing agents and the erection of chemists—all this can only be introduced throughout the country in the course of time.

As a preventative measure for the protection of Italian garrisons, workmen, and ever-growing native Italian population, the natives have to undergo medical treatment. The campaign against venereal disease is making slow progress. In Addis Abeba many field hospitals treat the natives free of charge, and prostitution is under vigilant supervision. Approximately fifteen hundred native women, each of whom occupies a house to herself, may be visited by Italian citizens only; and the same applies to the three authorized houses with their total of forty-seven white girls. The latter are also not allowed to receive native men. All who practise street prostitution must be in possession of an official permit. They are medically examined three times a week, and in the case of disease they are sent to hospital. Everything possible is done to warn nationals and remind them that eighty out of a hundred Abyssinians suffer from venereal disease.

In the early part of 1937 altogether sixty-five cases of black pox were reported, and by that summer a hundred and forty-six thousand natives and over three thousand

Italians were inoculated. No new cases have been reported. Malaria does not of itself exist in the capital, but there are isolated instances in which it has been brought in from other places. Typhoid also only occurs sporadically, and there has not yet been an epidemic. Pestilence and cholera are practically unknown in Addis Abeba. All infectious and contagious cases are removed to the Duke of Abruzzi's Hospital, situated far from the city, in which there are separate sections for nationals and natives.

The native custom when children die of burying them close to their parents' huts is being, not only for sanitary reasons, strenuously combated. The principal causes of death are given as tuberculosis, dysentery, and heart trouble brought about by syphilis. Seldom is insanity the reason. It has not yet been possible to ascertain which races and tribes are the healthiest.

All children in schools and hospitals are regularly treated with the object of preventing trachoma, a disease of the eye. On Tuesdays, grown-ups can obtain free eye treatment at the field hospitals in Addis Abeba, in which city health inspectors are also constantly searching for people who fail to come forward with their sufferings. With the aid of sixty-four loud-speaker vans announcements are made in all thickly populated areas giving information as to where inoculation or an examination of tubercular cases can be had free of charge and where female and foot specialists can be gratuitously consulted. The response towards the end of 1937 was a very large one.

The Health Department is also taking those measures which, although belonging to a rather different sphere, are essential for the protection of national health. Thus, in the summer of 1937, when ten cases of rabies were reported, during June and July between four and five thousand dogs were destroyed by strychnine in Addis Abeba alone, and the same number a few months later. In other districts a campaign was opened against the insect plague—of which we in Europe can have no conception—because of the many eye complaints, typhus and malaria germs which

can be transmitted by flies and mosquitoes. A certain species of flea has an unpleasant habit of getting under human-toe-nails, where it lays eggs which later grows to the size of small peas ; the larvæ afterwards consume away the flesh of the toes, which never grows again. There are certain kinds of lice which cause other injuries and complaints. The Health Department has to be on guard against all such dangerous opponents. In simple terms, which can be understood by all, enlightenment is given to the people with the aid of loud-speakers. News of all Government measures, also of those whose aim is to promote the well-being of the natives, spreads like wildfire.

The man who discovered the causes of sleeping-sickness and elephantiasis and, like Robert Koch, must be counted as one of world's most famous students of tropical diseases, Sir Aldo Castellani, has done his country inestimable service, not only by founding the Tropical Institute in Rome, which was opened in 1931 for research in diseases of this kind, but also by his valuable work during the Abyssinian campaign in his capacity as Chief of the Italian Medical Service. He may be thanked for the fact that the troops were saved from epidemics and that the number of malaria, dysentery, and typhoid cases was very small. The decree, published in 1936, which made it obligatory for a doctor wishing to practise in the colonies to take a comprehensive extra course, and make practical studies at the Tropical Institute in Rome, is also his work. The Italian Crown Princess took no less than three separate courses before leaving for East Africa, in the spring of 1936, as Head of the Red Cross organization. A regulation obliges all nurses to study at the Tropical Institute for at least a month before they are allowed to leave for East Africa.

The African climate imposes a great strain upon the European constitution, and certain principles of health must be rigidly respected. The health authorities and the labour institutes, who employ large numbers of men, give important advice, which must be respected, to all new-

comers as soon as they arrive on African soil. Scorpions, tarantulas, and snakes, the tsetse fly and the entire brood of the anopheles, the heat and rare atmosphere—all these are a menace to the health of the Europeans. Only healthy white men can undertake successfully the giant task of colonizing Italian East Africa.

#### THE ITALIAN WOMAN AND HER TASKS UPON AFRICAN SOIL

It was left to Fascism to make the Italian woman and mother conscious of her duties to the community and the State and to give her a sense of sacrifice also in this direction. The economic sanctions, which, during the Abyssinian War from November 1935 to the summer of 1936, aimed at crippling Italy's powers of resistance, collapsed on the united front of the women, who held out as bravely as their husbands and brothers in the fighting line. Signor Mussolini thanked them in that remarkable speech, which for the first time he made on the Piazza Venezia before an audience of women, many hundreds of thousands of whom had followed his call. And their answer contained far more than any number of high-sounding phrases could have held, when they chorused: 'Duce, our children belong to you.'

Mussolini, who undoubtedly would frown upon busy-body women's organizations, would have equally little use for women who regarded inaction and lack of interest as womanly virtues. The man who exclaimed: 'I detest the idea of a picturesque Italy!' could not possibly have any use for easy-going, indifferent women as the mothers and instructresses of his Fascist youth.

In Italian East Africa, as well as at home, it will be the duty of woman, both as a member of one of the Fascist women's associations and as mother or daughter in the family circle, to dedicate herself to all kinds of charitable work. But that is not enough. In this great work of colonization, which also gives men tasks greater and more difficult than those to which they were accustomed at

home, the productive woman—as a woman, of course—must give the fullest practical effect to her primitiveness and instincts. She must not say: ‘My husband will do it all right.’ He has his jobs to do, and they are manifold enough in all conscience! No, she must concentrate all her forces to obtain a satisfactory and harmonious solution of the many questions of comfort, feeding the family and health, as well as those of home-sickness, settling down and adapting oneself to strange conditions. How much that demands and means, and to what extent the husband’s ability to put the best into his work depends upon the moral and material support which his wife gives him, is something which can only be realized by those who have already had some experience of the dull monotony of pioneer work in the colonies and the sacrifices and privations which go with it.

Generally, many months of separation have to be suffered before the wife joins her husband in Africa, for the man goes ahead to start work and build a home. This time of waiting a woman should employ to the best purpose, making use of it as an opportunity for perfecting herself in every direction as a wife and mother. She must be able to deal with all housework without outside assistance, she must know how to repair clothes and iron them, and she must learn to value pots and pans, flower vases, and other articles from quite different points of view. Are they strong and durable, and if necessary can they be easily repaired over there? In brief, there is almost nothing which a woman, to be thoroughly equipped for a colonial life, does not need to know.

One of the principal things which a woman must study is which illnesses threaten adults and children and how these can be prevented by correct feeding and proper care of the health. On account of the climate, as well as for reasons of good taste, clothing must differ from that worn in the Mother Country. It would certainly seem rather absurd if, in an African settlement, women went about in European city attire and with dyed hair, which no hair-dresser for miles round would know how to treat.



The successful upbringing of sons and daughters demands a complete understanding of all problems connected with the transplantation in foreign soil, and only those mothers who possess practical common sense and an ability to adapt themselves to altered circumstances will succeed in mastering them.

Even more so than the married woman, single women, whether they have occupations or not, should pay serious consideration to circumstances which speak for and against settlement in Africa. The climate alone would represent a powerful argument against emigration by a woman approaching middle age. The separation from relations, to young women especially, means a very great sacrifice, and without strong faith, genuine satisfaction in work and life, and perhaps the finding of a permanent home, would not be possible. Nowhere could girls of a marrying age find better prospects of marriage than in the woman-starved colonies.

If a thirst for adventure in itself is not enough, and though unconcern should not be confused with courage, that is still no reason why young people who are keen, healthy, and ambitious, should be advised to give up their intention of going to East Africa, for every radical change is fraught with a certain risk. Give the matter earnest consideration and much thought, and don't close the door on your return—but once you have made up your mind, hesitate no more and place trust in your star. In any case, there are difficulties enough to overcome, and generally it means waiting many months before such matters as departure, accommodation, and the employment agreement for the position of teacher, typist, or telephonist, or whatever the job is, have been settled. But as emigration on the part of women is specially encouraged, a girl can often arrange her departure in quicker time than her brother is able to arrange his.

The Women's Fascist Organization has not remained idle, and is engaged to-day, every atom as much as during the time of Sanctions, in preparing the nation's women-

folk for their new spheres of occupation. At the end of 1937 a course was held at Fascist Headquarters for leaders of the women's section. Following that, in the spring of 1938, a course was commenced at the premises of the Fascist Institute for Italian East Africa, in the Palazzo Brancacci. It was attended by five hundred women and Young-Fascists, who were lectured on subjects of racial, political, and economic importance. Apart from questions of colonization principles, colonial geography, hygiene, and so on, the women are also given practical instruction in growing vegetables and flowers, baking bread and milking cows. Now, courses lasting three months, and occupying three hours a week, are held in all important provincial centres. At the end there is an examination, and successful pupils receive a certificate.

Many men, including some who have had long experience as heads of families, are surprised at the amount of preparation which it is considered necessary that a woman should receive before emigrating to East Africa. They need to be enlightened in order to appreciate fully the responsibilities of house and garden, and the many extra duties, which fall upon the shoulders of a woman in the colonies. Where occupations and emigration in East Africa are concerned, the Italian Government has made many regulations and taken many precautionary measures designed to prevent the possibility of economic collapse and to check hasty decisions. The more thoroughly the women are instructed and prepared, the less likely are men to embark upon ill-considered adventures.

The question of accommodation still plays a decisive part in the settlement of Italian East Africa. As a woman's life over there, even more than at home, is spent in the house, and as a man spends nearly all his free time also in the house, the comfort and happiness of the family depends enormously upon the living accommodation, which is often very inadequate in the matter of space and imperfect in other particulars. In Addis Abeba I saw Italian society women, formerly accustomed to every imaginable luxury,

living in roughly-adapted, two-roomed native huts. They showed me kitchens and other parts which, with the aid of boards from packing-cases and similar crude materials, they had patched and made more or less serviceable. On the other hand, I was in new buildings, modernly and very tastefully furnished, which the Italian Government has placed at the disposal of officers and State officials. In such circumstances, the women undoubtedly find it much easier to feel at home, and are able in some cases to provide a small room for occasional visitors.

Often, women of to-day are not independent housewives in the sense that their grandmothers needed to be, for modern cleaners, refrigerators, and other household machines are made to do much of the work. But the colonial housewife, both in the towns and in the country, must be ready to dispense with all these modern aids, even if electric current is available, because the problems of repairs and spare parts, service and space cannot at present be overcome. Not only in the country, but also in the towns, life is on the simplest country scale. To make it a practical success in every sense is woman's greatest task.

#### THE MACHINERY AS A WHOLE

All State machinery, and that of the Fascist State in particular, runs like a clock, in which all the wheels are connected and keep each other in motion. In Italy, of course, a great deal goes on behind closed doors; only special reports and announcements reach the public, to show, like a clock striking, that the works are functioning reliably.

In Italian East Africa an independent machinery, adapted to suit local conditions, has been set going in a remarkably short time. Already all official departments, Government concerns, and private companies, are working according to fixed principles and regulations. These, however, may not be considered as final, for at present everything is still in the melting pot, and no wheel in the machinery can definitely continue to revolve at the speed which was first set.

This elasticity makes great flexibility on the part of everyone essential. Constantly, new viewpoints and discoveries are appearing, which have to be taken into account, and everyone must be prepared to do his part in facilitating the necessary changes. There is great fascination in watching big results grow out of small beginnings, in seeing houses, streets, and cities take form, and in observing each picture grow more complete.

Nothing is allowed to stand still. Commissions, leading officials and engineers, generals and architects, cotton planters and builders of electricity works, fur-traders, cinema owners and transport men—all travel about the country, examine progress, set up fresh plans and attend conferences at different places. For instance, the proprietors of big transport firms must know exactly what is being done in the way of road-making and must be able to judge what changes in cost and prices are to be expected. For the cinema owner the development of new housing estates and for the fur-trader the business done in the markets, the attitude of the natives, questions of currency, and the general economic situation are important ; and all are dependent upon measures which the Government takes after reviewing the reports of the generals, high officials, and the commissions.

So all work for and with each other. From the Governor down to assistant managers, those in charge are responsible for seeing that Italian workmen are well treated and paid and—that they do their jobs.

On 21 April and 28 October, the two National Holidays, year by year numerous buildings are dedicated, foundation stones are laid, institutions are opened, and new undertakings commence their activities. There is no question of important parts of planned works not being ready at the appointed time—as was the case with the Paris International Exhibition in 1937—and the Fascist Government being content to let it happen. In Addis Abeba it was known months before that, on 28 October 1937, extension work and interior improvements, affecting two large

hospitals and various field ambulance units, would be completed and that, in addition, new barracks, a home for the poor, a bacteriological institute, a bridge, and the addition to the main electricity works would be officially opened.

In Asmara, on the same date, the Governor of Eritrea announced the completion of a large number of houses for municipal officials and employees, other buildings containing twenty-two flats for members of native staffs employed in Government offices, a municipal polyclinic, and an office building to accommodate the staff of the Mines Department. Work which had also been undertaken in connection with the Mai-Cioet River canal system and the reconstruction of the dams at Adi Nefas, Acria, and Sembel were also stated to have been satisfactorily completed. All places, however small, in which Italians live and work, exert themselves to finish at least one new undertaking by one of the two above-mentioned dates. Lists of these achievements, which are published by the Ministry of Italian East Africa, contain ample evidence of the energy and enthusiasm which inspire colonists. There is, as one might expect, considerable rivalry between the various cities ; all are anxious to beat the others. In different ways, the towns demonstrate progress. Assab now has places of assembly for the workers ; in Massaua there are distilleries and cold-storages ; Taulud, in Harar, has built twenty houses for Civil Servants ; six transportable houses have been constructed in Gimma ; Gondar has been equipped with a system of water-mains ; and in Gorgora a Residency and homes for Government employees have been completed.

But in the spring of 1939, when the powerful broadcasting station in Addis Abeba begins its transmissions in Italian, Arabic, Amharic, and Galla, when, once again, twenty-five thousand leaflets descend upon the capital to announce to the natives new Government decrees and other information, and when the cinema, besides being merely a place of entertainment, will be used as an instru-

ment in the political education of the native citizens—then Addis Abeba will again occupy the leading place. The *Corriere dell' Impero*, which formerly appeared only three times a week, has, since February 1938, been published daily. Its circulation has passed the thirty-three thousand mark, and the paper, which is produced in the same *format* as organs of the Italian Press, reaches all parts of Italian East Africa by air post. It is also read by the natives, that is by those who are not illiterates, since, in addition to four pages in Italian, it contains pages in Amharic and Arabic.

Wireless and film vans take news, music, and films, not only into the neighbouring districts, but also to such places as Gimma and other provincial centres, since the Duce expressed a wish that even the remotest parts should be supplied with wireless and that all military commands and labour camps should provide facilities for 'collective listening.'

Although Addis Abeba is the headquarters of the Press and Propaganda Department, Italian daily papers published in Asmara, Mogadiscio, Harar, and Gimma, join with the Addis Abeba *Corriere dell' Impero* in giving all the important news and, especially, full reports of all matters affecting East Africa. That a ban has been placed upon tree-felling or the sale of plots of land, or that hotels may not be built costing more than a fixed sum—these are matters in which nearly everyone is interested. Important innovations are announced almost daily. The African Ministry in Rome reports the fixing of areas for the development of cotton-growing, whose organization and direction is to be entrusted to the appropriate industrial and agricultural concerns, or announces new regulations governing mining in Italian East Africa and the granting of claims, not exceeding 4500 acres, to individual prospectors.

The development of Italian East Africa would not be possible unless certain principles and schemes were respected; but despite that, the Fascist motto, 'First live, and then philosophize,' has not been forgotten. The

Party quickly adapted itself to meet the demands of colonization in the very early days and, in the place of syndical organizations for the workers, created 'Assistance Offices,' whose business it was to look after the needs of all who arrived in the country—craftsmen, engineers, contractors, motor drivers, mechanics, and doctors. This useful work continues.

In 1937, in all parts of Italian Ethiopia, labour offices were created (subordinate to the Labour Inspection Department in Addis Abeba, which keeps the labour offices in touch with each other), which settles disputes and matters connected with labour agreements, and takes up social and economic problems with the Governors of Provinces. The activities of these labour offices cover such a wide field that it would not be possible to deal with them in detail in this résumé. But it may be said that they perform work the vast importance of which is officially recognized. A few weeks after he began his duties, the Duke of Aosta, who had been paying a visit to the Fascist headquarters, made a special point of inspecting the premises of the Labour Office in Addis Abeba.

I should greatly like to examine microscopically all details of the machinery which sets Abyssinia in motion, in order to be able to give positive proof of what has been done to those doubters who argue that 'it can't happen in such a short while; we must wait another ten or twenty years before we can expect results.'

And so, even at the risk of boring some of my readers, I will end this chapter with some particulars of the many achievements which can already be noted.

Postal and telegraph services have been completely reorganized. Ethiopia has issued its own series of handsome postage stamps. International chronology has been introduced. All labour and wage questions have been settled. All cities have a clean and peaceful appearance. Schools, hospitals, churches, and prisons are serving the purposes for which they were intended, and the religious customs and festivals of the natives are being respected.



A 'SPACCIO,' OR GENERAL STORE, WHICH IS RUN BY NATIVES AND IS TO BE SEEN IN ALL TOWNS





A THIEF RECEIVING A PUBLIC FLOGGING AT THE SCENE OF  
HIS MISDEEDS—THE MARKET-SQUARE

The Press, the wireless, and the cinema had all to be ~~created~~. Railways, trucks, motor vehicles, and aircraft are working to capacity. Banks and saving-banks are transmitting huge savings to the home country.

The ownership of property is being justly distributed. Italian colonization is exerting a powerful influence on local industries and trades. Scientific examination of the soil is being thoroughly undertaken. Agriculture is making rapid progress. The cattle are growing in number, and gaining in health, though they are not yet so numerous as before the war. New-formed societies under State supervision are at work in all spheres of life and commerce. Questions of water supply and lighting figured everywhere in the programme of work for 1938. Slavery has been abolished. Natives were earning good wages as soldiers, gendarmes, labourers, and servants. Ten times as much building was being undertaken in 1938 as in the previous year. But still the housing shortage will continue for many years, as it is quite impossible as yet to keep pace with the enormous demand.

Here I propose giving a few particulars of new undertakings which were completed in Addis Abeba by 28 October 1938 :

Consecrated sites for the fallen ; the construction of three bridges ; the Carabinieri Memorial ; the new wing in the Vittorio Emanuele III Hospital ; the first section of the water system and first section of the drainage system ; a mosque ; various Government buildings ; a further general hospital for natives ; new wards in the Duke of Abruzzi's Hospital ; barracks for the police and fire brigade ; the building of a slaughter-house, a cattle market, and a market for local produce.

Each Province has submitted details of new projects upon which work has begun. In Asmara numerous important large buildings and hospitals are being erected, and the water system is being extended. The first stages in the construction of a harbour for sailing vessels at Massaua

have been practically concluded. Agordat is building houses for Civil Servants, and Macalle a polyclinic for natives. Growing Mogadiscio also has a big programme of development in hand; the de Bono Grammar School is swiftly taking shape, customs sheds, warehouses, and hospitals are being enlarged, water systems are being overhauled, dams extended, new post offices built, and a housing scheme is making progress. Besides that, they are building a military hospital, a new Fascist headquarters, and a naval base. The wireless receiving station is being enlarged and an automatic telephone exchange is being installed.

In Gondar, and especially in New Gondar, post offices, banks, residential quarters, hospitals, and everything else, have sprung up almost since yesterday. The town of Dessie has for a long time given one the impression of being a go-ahead place, and the housing shortage, which is particularly acute there, is being steadily remedied.

In the Province of Harar, and more especially in the city itself, there are many encouraging signs of active development. Already there are a great many new buildings of practical utility, which, as far as possible, have been given an attractive green setting, and there is now talk of building a colonial club and other institutions for social purposes. In Diredaaua, the big railway and trade centre, and in the delightfully-situated town of Asba Littorio and the many smaller places in the vicinity, building is as active as in any of the principal cities. It would be possible to continue indefinitely adding details of this description to our list.

The great problems which the Italian Government means to solve in East Africa do not hover and threaten in the background, like gloomy shadows; they are being grasped and tackled without delay. With characteristic sobriety, Fascism does not dally long with theories and speculations, but places deeds before words. While others were growing grey hairs wondering when and how backward Abyssinia might be colonized, hundreds of thousands of willing hands

were at work putting Mussolini's six-year plan into execution. Without giving the imagination too much rein, we can safely predict that, even before the specified six years have passed, Italian East Africa will have made such progress that there will be many people from countries in all parts of the world anxious to go there and convince themselves that it is true.

But we prefer not to wait so long, and elect to set out forthwith, equipped with khaki suits, riding boots, and tropical helmet. But stop, where is my diary, our trustworthy escort? Let it speak.

## CHAPTER III

### MY DIARY

‘ WE ARE IN AFRICA ’

Rome, 22 October 1937.

ALTHOUGH I am still in Rome, in thought I am far away. This afternoon I had the privilege of paying a farewell call upon Signor Mussolini at the Palazzo Venezia. He took a blue pencil and traced on a map of Abyssinia the route which he wanted me to take—that meant a journey of more than six thousand miles ! Then, on the first page of my brand-new diary, he wrote in German, ‘ *Sieh unser neues Land mit offenen Augen !* ’ (See our new country through open eyes) and then said, half-jokingly, that he might have added, ‘ *und mit wachem Geist* ’ (and with an alert mind), but in this instance that was hardly necessary.

How clearly the Duce sees Italian East Africa in his own mind ! He spoke to me of the climate which, in Addis Abeba and Asmara especially, would hardly cause me any discomfort, of the rapid growth of the cities, of the roads which were in the course of construction, of the Pullman-Car service. . . . I listened attentively, not meaning to miss a single word, in order that I might remember them later on when I reached the places he had mentioned.

I am now packing. Are three suit-cases too many or too few, in addition to the typewriter, camera and rugs which I must take with me ? On board one must be attired in the ‘ ladylike manner,’ on the journeys in the ‘ practical-sporting ’ style, and on trips into the interior in the ‘ colonial-durable ’ fashion. Then in the cities one needs clothes which are both

fashionable and summery, for day wear, and those which are smart and warm, for the evenings. How many pairs of shoes and how much clothing does that make altogether? Definitely, three suit-cases are not enough!

*On board the Conte Rosso.*

The five days' voyage from Brindisi to Massaua simply pass in a flash. On board there are many Indians, Japanese, and representatives of other Asiatic races, but Italians are in the majority. A Civil Servant is taking his wife and children and their governess across with him. The governess is picking up a few hints from a compatriot who has lived many years in Asmara, and who is now taking a servant back to assist in the house. The men spend most of the time reading the ship's paper, the *Corriere del Mare*, and arguing about the purchasing power of a city like Addis Abeba. It is supposed to be bigger than Bari, though it has by no means the same volume of business. At the same time, it has considerable importance as a buying centre. Risks are big, but profits are correspondingly higher.

Now, as we enter the Suez Canal, it is beginning to get hot. We are content to dream. Let others work out the high duties which ship and freight will have to pay for the privilege of passing through! As we dance, we realize that the Red Sea, which washes the shores of Italian Eritrea, in the last three years has carried more ships, men and goods to Massaua than at any previous period in history. Early to-morrow morning we shall have opportunity of comparing its blueness with that of the Mediterranean. Then it means taking leave of this ship, which to us represents the last bit of Europe.

*Massaua, at midnight.*

The great buildings in Arab-Moorish style, which lie along the broad street of the harbour, are visible in the ship's lights, and a new moon has just appeared in a deep-blue, star-lit sky—Ramadan! The autumn month of fasting has just begun for Mohammedans. But it is certainly

not the autumn which we know. The thermometer registers over ninety degrees !

Arrangements for leaving the ship, and all that goes with it, are carried out smoothly and speedily. Port police see that there is no confusion or disorder—just as they do in Naples. We drive along the quayside under waving palms. Round about there is silence. I draw a deep breath. Is this the loneliness—is it the Africa which breeds homesickness ?

I am to spend the night in this magnificent Government building. The electric fan above my bed, with its mosquito-net covering, makes hardly a sound. The wardrobe is of metal, and the floor, of course, is a stone one. Attached to the room there is a spacious bathroom. Where can my luggage be ?

The steamer's siren gives the signal for departure. Like Lohengrin's silver swan, it glides majestically out of the harbour and disappears into the night.

At the main entrance of the house there is a native servant in a turban—where's my luggage ? He bows, but says nothing.

The light in the neighbouring café, the 'Southern Cross,' has long since disappeared, and in the harbour, too, it is getting darker. I wait for some time and then wander from the house in the direction of the sea, until, finally, I forget that I am waiting, and why I am waiting. And so I pass the first timeless hour on African soil. In any case, why hurry ? I probably should not sleep in any event. At the moment I feel very much wide-awake. At this point, a motor containing a European pulls up at the door. "I beg your pardon, but have you any idea where my luggage can be ?"

"It ought to have been here a long time ago." He calls the native servant. The latter, as before, silently nods.

We enter the house and open the door of the sitting-room next to my bedroom—the suit-cases are inside ! The gentleman in the white turban bows for the third time.

The Italian officer takes his leave, and says with emphasis,

which I might interpret as a gentle reproach, or an apologetic explanation, or even as a wise reminder: "Remember, we're in Africa."

*On the following day.*

Wearing the thinnest of summer clothing, white shoes and a tropical helmet—that is how people set out for a walk here in November. But although Massaua may be the hottest place on earth (from June to September), I do not find it unbearably so. I have known it little cooler in New York and Rio.

All big buildings in this city are situated along the big promenade, close to which are moored boat upon boat, discharging cargoes from early morn till late at night. From an airy room high up in the Fascio House one has a magnificent view, and can see as far as the neighbouring Taulud Island, where a great many houses are being built for Italians. I quickly grasped that—very much like Venice—five islands here constitute a whole and that anyone can travel from one to the other by car without actually realizing it.

Much has been read in the last two years about Massaua, the port where the troopships which were not going to Somaliland set ashore their passengers, and where mountains of boxes and barrels almost hid the harbour from view.

At the present time, the natives work during the day; after four o'clock, when it grows cooler, the Italian workmen start their tasks. But the latter are by no means so arduous as a year ago, since now, on the average, only fifteen Italian ships call at this port each week. Nowadays they discharge lemons, potatoes, and onions from Sicily—one might almost be in Hamburg!

Approximately six thousand Italians live here to fifteen thousand natives, but that is on account of the great importance of this place as a port. There is also a great deal of coming and going here. Nearly all the officers, workmen, and others bound for Abyssinia travel by way of Eritrea.

I had imagined nothing like the activity which exists



here, and I was rather surprised to make the discovery. The town is a mixture of the magnificent and the primitive ; it has the aspect of a big city, and at other times it seems almost countrified. There is much that is outworn and ripe for the housebreaker, and equally there is a great deal which is new. With its many mosques, native market, and brown-skinned, semi-nude public, and with the wretched huts of the old native quarter (which are soon to be pulled down), the town appears typically African.

The shops are distinctly modest in their pretensions. But however small the interior may be, the shop invariably is divided into two sections, one for Europeans and one for natives. Everything in connection with shipping and big commercial undertakings is conducted as in any European port. The Italians keep good order. Lorries and vans, many of them built by the famous Mercedes-Benz concern, park in long, neat lines on the spacious square close to the harbour. I can imagine what a fine spectacle it must be when thousands of Italians march on to this square on national holidays.

The system of employing all workmen on the collective principle, and of housing and feeding them together, has much to commend it. I was very eager to see the barracks in which, like soldiers, they are accommodated. Actually there was not much to see, and there is little to say about them, save that they are clean and extremely simple. No doubt, living in the new hotel, the 'Gheden,' or even in the old hotel, the 'Savoia,' is a good deal more pleasant. A man who is joined by his family, and has the fortune to secure a flat in the new worker's dwellings, opened in 1937, is certainly in luck. The new buildings lie outside the town and have the mountains as a background. The presence of two glass factories and a cement works worries no one ; people are only too glad to know that these are functioning and that the town is making headway. In the last two years it has made more progress than in the previous fifty, a fact which is evident to any visitor.

I made a hasty lunch, served by the white-clad house

factotum, whose wide green sash and self-tied yellow turban completed a colourful picture. He was the silent man of the previous evening. He glided barefooted through the room, and with his gloved hands placed forks and dishes before me with a skill which would have done credit to a court servant. As dessert, he brought me pineapple, but that, I learnt, was not grown locally.

My luggage had already been re-packed, as a motor trip to Asmara had been planned for the afternoon. Suddenly it seemed to me that I was seeing snow mountains in an alpine glow. I certainly would not have taken them for stacks of salt ! Africa was more prosaic than I imagined.

I debated whether to postpone for the present a visit which I had planned to the Dahlak Islands, but everyone to whom I mentioned the project shook his head and advised that the crossing would take up a lot of time and that the trip was a disappointment. Nevertheless, I should greatly have liked to make acquaintance with the lonely fisherfolk and their dealings in the valuable *trochi*, pearls, and turtles.

In the summer, as I swam in the Bay of Carthage, and from that watery angle gazed upon the ancient ruins, I made up my mind also to pay a visit to the many centuries-old city of Adulis near the port of Zula, not far from my present position. But my task is not to dwell in the history of years ago—my purpose is to explore a new land 'with open eyes.'

Punctually, the Fascist officer, who was to accompany me to Asmara, was announced. He had already been in Africa for twenty-three months, and was looking forward to a spell of leave. His colleague had spent as long as thirty-two months in Eritrea, but had recently become engaged, which apparently was the reason why he was in no special hurry to go on leave.

The three hours' journey to the mountains by rail (*Littorina*) might have been a very interesting trip, but the new asphalt road, completed after the war, can certainly be not less worth seeing. It twists and twines along the edge of a giant precipice, leaving sparse vegetation for luxuriant vegetation

as the altitude increases. On the way we passed the memorial stone of Dogali and, close by, the Cross. All the way we were accompanied by the wires and poles of the suspension railway—the longest in the world. Often one could almost touch the wires, and everywhere warning notices were posted, '*Attentione Teleferica.*' We ought to have gone by this route and flown for forty miles above the precipices. But as the small carriers are only intended for goods, and as to-day the line appeared to be taking a holiday, that was out of the question. It is a pity that this useful line, which is capable of carrying seven hundred and twenty tons daily in both directions, could not have been got ready before March 1937. It would have been of inestimable value had the war lasted longer.

We climbed to an altitude of 8000 feet. The atmosphere grew rare, and it began to get cool. I put on my overcoat and exchanged the tropical helmet for an ordinary hat.

I wondered whether soldiers or workmen were responsible for the inscriptions which one saw painted on so many of the rocks: 'Long live the Duce'—'Long live the King and the Viceroy,' and finally, as a reminder to all, 'God, family, and country.'

This road carries a tremendous volume of traffic, and time after time, in drawing out to pass, we just managed to scrape by the guard stones on the edge of the drop. I began to feel a little uneasy about it. Did anything ever happen here? My companion agreed that all sorts of things happened, but there was no necessity for me to have any fear.

At dusk we arrived in the well-lit, big African city. Electric signs flashed, the restaurants were crowded, smart men and women strolled through the streets, and long queues stood waiting outside the cinemas. Naturally, there is more here in the way of entertainment than in Massaua, but I was very surprised to find the difference so vast.

The hotel seemed packed. Anyone who had not booked in advance would have little hope of getting a room. In the café-bar I met some of the people I got to know in the ship. At various stages of the journey down to Mogadiscio some

of us are certain to meet again, sometimes in frosty air, as we have it to-night, but probably more often in tropical heat.

"Frau Diel, can you detect the Asmara spring?"

"Quite likely, but at the moment I detect nothing so much as hunger and thirst!"

"Then let's go and feed at the 'White Gazelle.'"

#### MY FIRST DINNER

*Asmara, early November.*

By taking the precaution of placing extra rugs, my overcoat, and a woollen cape on top of my bed, I managed to avoid being frozen last night. In daytime, too, over a middle-weight linen costume, I wear my cape until the sun properly breaks through; a more useful garment for this climate could hardly be conceived.

First I want to see the Italian quarter, then the native one and, in conclusion, the 'mixed' quarter. Altogether I have a week to devote to Asmara and district, and in that time I also want to inspect social institutions.

The centre part of the town is almost European in aspect. But suddenly one comes upon open country, where roads cease, and everything seems to end. Though not quite. Here new residential districts are springing up, and many very handsome villas are already occupied, despite the fact that motors can hardly move over the bumpy roads. One car came to a halt at the side of ours, and its occupant asked if we cared to look over his new house. He appeared to combine the jobs of architect and builder. From outside, the house with its coffee-brown walls had a matter-of-fact and restful appearance; the interior provided all manner of surprises. All furniture was of African timbers, and had been built and installed in exceedingly unusual ways. Never before had I seen a buffet which had a marble stove built into its centre. In the study the table had been fixed in the wall. An up-to-date colonial style was being tried out, and many interesting samples were on view. Many rooms in this ultra-modern house were completely furnished

down to the smallest details, while others were even without wallpapers. Such violent contrasts seem to me to be characteristic of things here as a whole. Everything is in the transition stage, in private and in official life, and provisional arrangements seem likely to continue for a considerable time. Eighty per cent of the houses in Asmara have been put up during the last two years. Before 1930 three thousand Italians lived here; now there are fifty thousand, exclusive of the military.

I find the utmost difficulty in retaining all I have seen and have been told, and I find equal difficulty in knowing my way about, since so many of the new squares and streets are still, apparently, unnamed.

Churches and cinemas, hospitals, hotels and boarding houses give work to many Italians. In every street, if we exclude those in the ancient centre of the town, building operations are in progress. The next item on the programme is the huge palace, in which all Government offices will be housed. After that come the big Fascist headquarters and the club house for Italian youth, as well as dwellings for Government employees. The list is never complete.

I am suffering from palpitations, for the rare mountain air here hardly allows one to keep going at the pace to which one is accustomed at home. But it is not easy to apply the brake. In no city in the world are eyes and ears so strained, and so occupied by powerful new impressions on all sides, as here. He would be a person of little soul whom these scenes failed to stir. I already believe that Asmara is the most progressive city in Italian East Africa. From the point of view of communications it is the most favourably situated, and for its cement consignments from Italy—and everything else—pays lower transport costs than Addis Abeba, which is situated in the interior of the country 750 miles farther south. But at the same time, Addis Abeba and Dessie, on account of other reasons, not least on account of their being points of vital importance in the development of the country, are places of greater importance.

Although I have only been here a couple of days, already

I can think of nothing else than building, work, progress. I had intended devoting study to the natives and things genuinely African ; instead of that, I am completely under the influence of the record-breakers. So fast is the pace set here that one gets dragged along with it.

This evening, as guest of the Governor and Donna Olga, I am to be present at my first dinner party in Africa. The women will dress as smartly as on similar occasions in Italy, and we shall be regaled with *Antipasto misto*, *Frittura piccata*, *Legumi*, and *Zabajone al Marsala*.

\*     \*     \*

No, the menu at this evening's dinner was quite different, but as genuinely Italian as the servant, in his white and gold robe, was genuinely African. As a German I was given a very cordial reception, and I heard many friendly hopes expressed in connection with German colonial claims. Here in the Italian Empire one seems to be much more closely in touch with these problems and their solution. A glance at the map—distances and difficulties seem to lose significance.

The perfectly smooth, polished mosaic floor in the principal drawing-room of the Governor's palace is ideally suited for dancing. A young Roman princess, who with her husband and three children has been living here for many years, and who told me how much she likes it and how well it agrees with her, might be compared with Lady Hamilton for her grace and charm. She was anxious to know whether I had seen the view from the minaret of the new mosque, whether I had been in the native market and whether I had yet paid a visit to the Excelsior Cinema.

I am attending to all that during these next few days. Since practically only Italians use the restaurants in the European quarter, these are almost identical with Italian ones, even though they may be named 'Southern Cross,' or 'Restaurant of 18 November' (recalling the commencement of Sanctions, which were imposed on 18 November 1935).

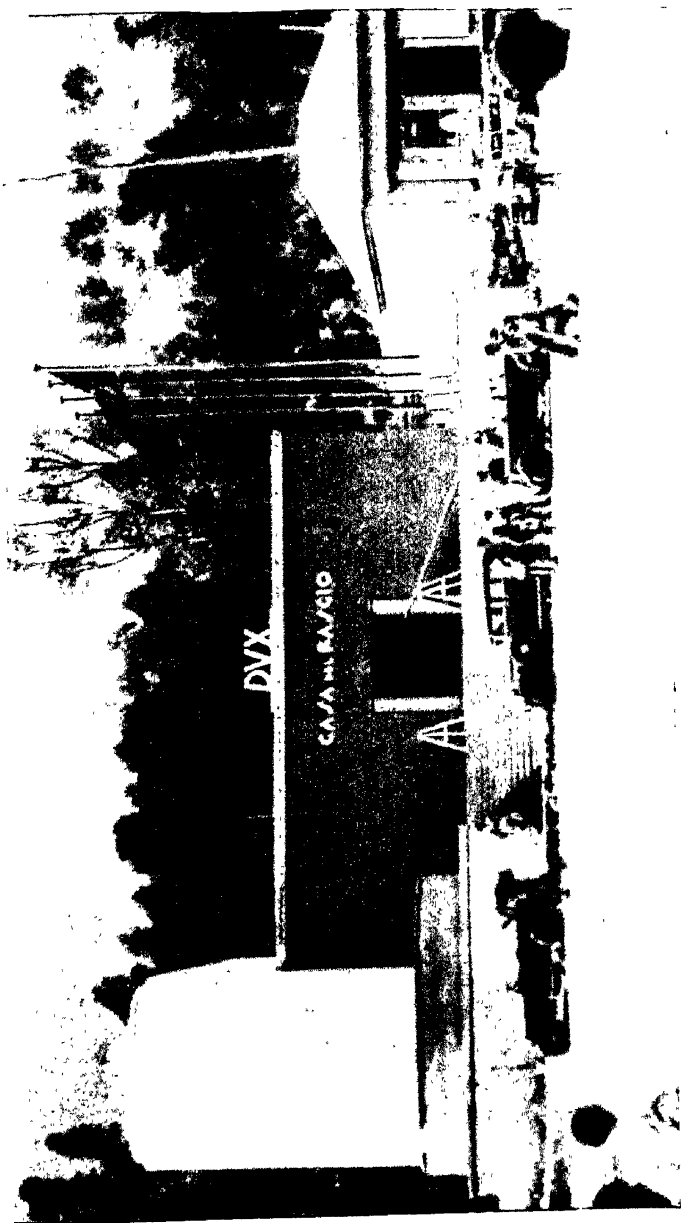
The modern cinemas? They are exactly similar to those in Rome or Naples.

The view from the high tower certainly is worth seeing. The three, distinctly separate, residential districts can be easily picked out, as well as the *tukul* village and native market. The Roman Catholic Cathedral and many of the official buildings might have belonged to a German town. The new market and the fish market, on the other hand, are buildings with a distinct colonial touch. The Viale Mussolini is wider than the main thoroughfare in Rome, but nearly all the buildings here have only one or two floors.

Is convenience or lassitude the explanation why people here never walk long distances if they can go by car? And most of them seem to ride, for there is not a house which has not several motors standing outside. The Government car-park in Asmara can hold approximately seven hundred private cars and other motor vehicles. They stand in large open garages which are, however, covered by a corrugated iron roof. The cars are driven by specially trained soldiers and Blackshirts, and skilled natives assist with the repairs.

I did not like to drive into the native quarter alone, particularly as I wanted to get out and walk round, first in the market and then in the side streets where the shops of native craftsmen are grouped. Here are miniature shops in which home-made ornaments, such as Coptic Crosses of silver, filigree bracelets, gold ear-rings, etc., are offered for sale. The men squat lazily on the floor while the women and youths run the shop. They open the glass cases, extract the object which the customer has asked to see, and close it again like lightning—they must have met with unwelcome experiences! The prices are high, and seldom is it possible to get them reduced. No one is pressed to buy, and it seems that the vendors have no cause to worry, for they have never known such times as those enjoyed during the last few years. In the old days the articles hardly cost half the price which is now being demanded.

For some reason or other the looks of the native men



THE NEWLY BUILT FASCHIO HOUSE IN THE MAIN STREET OF DESSIE





NEWLY-ERECTED ASKARI VILLAGE IN THE CITY  
OF MASSARA

Here soldiers live with their families.

literally caused me physical discomfort. Not that I could say that they stared or that there was anything challenging in their look, but there was something unfathomable in it making it impossible for me even to offer them my hand. It was very little different in the case of the women. I wanted to hear about this and that, interpreters were there to help, and yet I found difficulty in putting questions to them. Their movements, their facial expression, the odour which they exude and their hair with its dressing of rank butter—everything to me was strange and queer. The fact that natives made my bed was one which I could not bring myself even to think about. Nevertheless, there is no doubt at all that many of them are the reverse of stupid, and many are of good character. One has only to notice how they know their trades and how ably they answer questions. But with me, the uncomfortable feeling when they are near remains, even when the natives are lighter in colour and taller and of better physique. I simply cannot understand how white women can live in close association with members of these races, and, indeed, how they can entertain intimate relations with them.

Before their own cinemas was built, natives were permitted to occupy certain seating accommodation in the Italian theatres. They were delighted to have a building of their own, and when this was first opened, attendances were large. But after a comparatively short time, they began noticeably to drop away, and the reserved seats in the Italian cinemas began to fill up again. Evidently, they did not care to be kept apart. Now, it is intended to abolish the old privilege, and keep them away from the European cinemas altogether, in order that they may gradually accustom themselves to using their own film theatres and learn to keep to themselves.

Outside the city the natives are building, under Italian supervision, their own stadium, and they do extra time without payment. Those who do not wish to work on, pay a fixed sum to obtain their release. Several times, when on my way to the Luce Film Institute, I have passed this site, which lies on high ground and is rather hilly.

A custom which I have formed in the course of my many travels is to ask myself on frequent occasion whether I should like to live in this or that place. Asmara undoubtedly has many charms and attractions to offer. A fertile soil provides trees, flowers, and many kinds of vegetables. You have variety and opportunities for meeting kind and interesting people ; and the climate—but that is where I draw the line. Is it always spring here ? Or is it more correct to say that one has samples of all four seasons every day ? The altitude it is which causes most discomfort and produces that state of restlessness which attacks heart and nerves. Perhaps one would get used to it in time—but there are many men who have been obliged to give up their positions, either because they themselves or their wives were unable to stand it. It is a tricky paradise, in which a tremendous amount of work is being done, a circumstance which again is attributable to the climate.

It was not on my programme to pay a visit to the Bank of Rome in Asmara—what was there to see save pay-desks and waiting clients ? But this branch, here in this busy place—apparently it had only been opened a short time before—was, after all, an African house, and the men, who came and went in groups, writing out cheques, paying in wages, and counting, with rough working hands, notes on to the unpolished, unstained wooden counter—those were not ordinary bank customers.

The big counter is in the shape of a semicircle. Behind it, all of them visible, sit the bank employees, while the noisy crowd is assembled on the far side of the counter. It is a bank such as I have always imagined an African farmers' bank to be, the only difference being that here there are not so many broad-brimmed hats to be seen. All the customers were men, some of whom arrived by cycle and car, though most of them came on foot.

Money makes people nervous—there was scarcely a man who held his notes in a steady hand, and everyone seemed to be in a hurry. Work waited, and all wanted and had to earn more money. Why were they living in this place ;

what was their aim? They wanted to get on, send for their families, and start a new home—and that cost money. They would rather scrape along for a few years, and suffer privations, if that meant securing a safe future.

That was always the manner of the Italian emigrants who in the past went to North and South America and North Africa: they saved and saved, in order later to reap the benefit at home. It is in their blood. Here, at this branch of the Bank of Rome, we were seeing a film of life, which one might call: 'The savings of Italy's sons protect country and future.' I am reminded of what Signor Mussolini said on one occasion during the Abyssinian campaign: "It is a war of the people. The people are conducting it as if it were their own private affair. It is a war of the poor, the disinherited, the proletariat. . . ."

As I now see it, it was waged by the many who in their own country could hardly eke out an existence, and from whom, in recent years especially, almost every chance of emigration had been taken away. Too much pressure had developed within a boiler, which no one seemed willing to ventilate. It became a case of a nation having to help itself, if it wished to go on existing, and of breaking its way through, as a plant endeavours to do, to the sun and the light which feed it.

The Italian nation is proud and happy to be able to produce evidence of its vitality and ability to make good in a newly created empire. The toast, which a highly placed man drank to me, as a German woman, during my first dinner in Italian East Africa, ought now to be our election cry: 'Germany as a satisfied colonial Power will also make her people happy in the future.'

#### IN THE SIUMAGALLE GOLD-MINE

"You must visit this most interesting and biggest gold-mine in Eritrea, especially as you have already been a thousand feet down into the Grotta Calda sulphur-mines in Sicily."

"What have these two undertakings in common?"

"There is the fact that the miners are Italians, to whom no sacrifice is too much and no work too hard. Moreover, these mines, which have already been worked by the Ancient Egyptians and the Portuguese, are of national economic importance. The English met with too strong competition here, and abandoned them, and we have now got them going again and are making them pay."

I was soon on my way. Asmara was rapidly left behind. The beauty of this kind of travel is that one has glimpses of so many occupations, and sees the people at work in so many different spheres. Gradually the details form themselves into a whole, and one has a clear picture of the entire scene.

The road was very bumpy, but for fifteen kilometres I could manage to put up with it. Graziani and other great men who have inspected the mines had to take this route—there seemed no excuse for a globe-trotting woman shirking it.

How did they find the gold? Did they dig for it, or did they wash it? Was it an occupation quietly conducted, or were those engaged in it in the throes of a sort of gold-rush fever?

"Gentlemen, I desire neither to leave this rich area with filled pockets nor stuffed out with information. If I come away with a general impression and an idea of the whole undertaking, and see how the miners work and live, that will be quite enough for me. Further, I am anxious to see the German Krupp machines, which I have heard so much about. In the ship in which I travelled there was a German engineer who is now employed at these mines; does he share a house with the Italian executives?"

No, the three Germans employed here have a small, attractive house to themselves, in which they take their meals and spend their spare time. It lies at the end opposite to that at which my tour of inspection began.

"These two small barracks and the old shaft are all that the English built during the thirteen years they were here, from 1901 to 1914, and that is all they left behind. Actually,

there were only about eleven of them, and some two hundred natives. For twenty years the mine lay idle. Everything you see here in the way of buildings, machinery, and gear has been installed during the last few months, and on 14 February 1937 the concern, which with others belongs to the A.M.A.O. (*Azienda Minerale Africa Orientale*), was opened, and it began work under State supervision. German firms supplied the machines, and Italians built the electrical plant.

"There are a hundred and twenty Italian workmen and four hundred natives fully employed here. We built them sleeping and living accommodation, and we have twelve families living in small, modern houses, which are equipped with electric cookers, etc. The furniture is manufactured in our own workshops. The dining-rooms are comfortably furnished, and there is good food, and meat twice a day. Yes, these white rolls we bake ourselves; and the dainty little church over there our people—all of them do their share—are building on their afternoons off. Building their own show, and taking their own share of responsibility, gives the men great satisfaction. The cost of equipping the mine will amount to seven million lire, and in seven years we can, and mean to, make it earn the capital. In English hands the undertaking was a flop, but we, with German help, want to get it going again and make it a large and paying concern.

"Getting the gold?—that, even with the employment of the most up-to-date means, is a long job, passing through many stages before the pure metal can find its way into sacks ready for transport. Here we are only concerned to find gold; but in other places platinum is also found.

"This new shaft goes down three hundred feet. Would you like to see something of gold-containing quartz and discover what the difference is between Wolfram Gold, Iron Gold, and Quartz Gold? The last is the most important. The stone yields sixteen grammes of gold to the ton. In a month we can get between eighteen and twenty kilogrammes of gold, worth about half a million lire, out of

this mine. That's quite a lump ! Gold lies everywhere here, but the people either did not know it, or knew that gaining it was no nursery game. There is another mine three miles from Asmara, but that is much smaller."

One can spend hours here looking round—but how different in modern technical methods is an African mine to the picture which we have in our imaginations. Down below, in the pit, where the quartz is mined and where, they explained to us, there is a corridor nearly five miles long, and where recently another shaft has been sunk and a small lift installed—only there, far under the surface of African soil, do we feel like Robinson Crusoes in our solitude. I doubt that all of us, like the miners, would care to spend four hours underground and then work for another four at the pit-head. That is no light day's work. It is gratifying to know that the men are provided with plenty of opportunities for spending their spare time in pleasant and healthy recreation. Before 1938 has passed, a Party and Dopolavoro House, as well as a school and other buildings, will have been finished.

The number of small, independent worlds—scientific institutions, industrial and technical undertakings, and agricultural enterprises—which have now taken root in African soil is a very large one. Having chosen an area suitable for their particular purposes, they go swiftly and courageously to work. It is not surprising that old Eritrea has made far greater progress than the other provinces. But one can already foresee a change spreading in the near future over the whole land as far as the Indian Ocean.

Not far from the city there are various special enterprises, each of which performs its own task in the service of the whole colony. The gold-mines of Siumagalle are an important economic undertaking providing the home country with much-needed gold. The Empire derives benefits of a quite different nature from such institutions as the State Experimental Station, which is occupied, not only in research work, but with the supply of serum for the treatment of human and animal epidemics, of which foot-and-mouth

disease is the most widespread. To-day it is the largest and most important institution of its kind in Italian East Africa, and supplies also lymph for the various inoculations which soldiers and civilians have to undergo. Professor Cilli conducted me through his city of science, and one of the things which specially pleased me was to see in the corridors pictures of our great German scholars, Behring, Löffler, and Robert Koch, hung side by side with those of their famous international colleagues. Professor Cilli assured me that he devoted much study to German scientific works and that from his own experience he knew the great value of German medicaments. He told me that he estimated that there were in the country between fifteen and twenty million cattle and that in days past their numbers were constantly being decreased by epidemics of various sorts of disease. The natives have now been sufficiently enlightened to cause them to have their young stock inoculated after the rainy period, and not to grumble at the charge of twelve lire per animal. Professor Cilli judges that about three hundred thousand inoculations will be carried out in the autumn of 1938. Every year a particular zone—in 1938 Tigray—is toured by European veterinary surgeons.

I had two hours to spend in this instructive institution, which although it forms a small world to itself, at the same time has an influence which is felt far beyond its boundaries. I had then to visit the big grazing grounds with their great herds of cattle, the small zoological garden, in which all kinds of animals, among them a tiger, are kept for experimental purposes, and the many laboratories.

The subject and its vast importance so took my interest that I asked also to be shown the new plans of branch institutes which are to be founded in Addis Abeba, Harar, and Gondar.

It must be a great satisfaction to a scientist to be provided by Providence with the opportunity of building up a life-work such as this and, simultaneously, of doing his nation such useful service. There is little doubt that Faust derived similar satisfaction.



## BY BOMBING 'PLANE TO LAKE TANA

*Asmara, 10 November 1937.*

Although, after my strenuous days of intensive sight-seeing, I was sadly in need of sleep, I had a very disturbed night. I had just got to sleep, when I was awakened by a knock on the window. Suddenly it occurred to me that Marshal Graziani's answer must have arrived from Addis Abeba telling me if and when a military aeroplane would be at my disposal for the journey to Gondar. My guess was accurate. A messenger sent by the Governor brought the information and added that a car would arrive at seven o'clock to take me to the military aerodrome.

What was the time now?—fortunately, only ten o'clock. So I set to, packed my suit-cases, and made all arrangements for the morning. There still remained a few hours for sleep. Probably the landing grounds at Gondar and Lake Tana would be some distance out, so it would be advisable to wear boots. I wondered whether there would be some steps for getting in and out of the machine. In case there should not be, I decided to wear my khaki costume with the trouser-skirt. I remembered, too, that it was cold in the air, and so decided not to pack my overcoat. What about a dress to wear in the evening? But that was carrying speculation a little too far.

What sort of machine would it be? Perhaps one of those huge 'planes capable of carrying a three-ton load of bombs. At an altitude of four thousand metres they are able to reach a maximum speed of two hundred and twenty miles an hour. There might be some excuse for feeling a little nervous in such a 'fortress of the air,' surrounded by machine-guns and powerful bombs. I earnestly hoped they would refrain from letting them off!

I imagined military aerodromes to be quite different. The one at Asmara, newly laid out, is enormous in size, and in the mornings there is an activity and a noise hardly exceeded on civil aerodromes. More than a dozen 'planes

stood ready to take off. Italian mechanics, Askaris, officers, and bearers, bringing boxes and post-bags, came and went. Close to me there was a heavy motor-cycle—I wondered if we were to take that to Lake Tana with us. Which machine should we use?

They seemed to think it would be No. 7. There it was. I had just reached the point of confirming that the number suited me, when the Air-Chief of Eritrea, General Laghi, introduced himself and invited me to travel in his three-engined machine. Instead of a number, this machine bore a star on a blue background.

The air-screws began to turn faster, we taxied along the ground, and a few moments later were in the air. A second pilot took his seat at the second set of controls, next to General Laghi. Several Air Force officers were also passengers.

I put cotton-wool in my ears, and got out a writing-block and a pencil, for it was impossible to talk.

Some sitting on small benches, and others standing in the corridor of the machine, we parried with flexible knees the 'bumps.'

The wireless operator, with ear-phones on, began to tap out a message in morse. An officer showed me on the map the route we were to take. A small arm-chair was then placed by the half-open entrance door, so that I might have air, and a good view at the same time.

My neighbour wrote down: 'You can also travel from Asmara to Gondar by the new auto-road. The distance is three hundred and forty-five miles, and you need fourteen hours for the journey.'

Shortly after we left Asmara we flew over a wide expanse of dead, desert-like country. Occasionally a green field could be detected. Native brown huts were the only sign that the part was inhabited.

'The earth surface is as curly as the hair of its inhabitants.' Indeed, it was exceptionally marked by deep ravines, gullies, and watercourses. It was uniformly wild in character—an awe-inspiring, terrible country. 'We are

now flying at a height of 2600 feet, but that means 10,000 feet above sea-level, and we are maintaining a speed of a hundred and ten miles an hour.'

On account of the freshness of the breeze, it was better not to poke one's head overboard. But the zigzag road and its dangerous-looking corners held one's gaze. I pointed down to them, and drew a corner on the writing-block with my finger. I was told that they were soon to be altered. Maps were now unfolded again, and the officers began to show signs of eagerness. Fingers signed a date, and a large conical mountain to our left was pointed out: Wedeboi Tabor—war! Presently came the Mareb River and, in the background, half hidden in the morning mist, the 'Finger of Adua.' My companions explained by holding up their thumbs—certainly, the peak in the distance looked very much like a finger held up in warning.

What a terrain! Was it indeed possible to advance through it? Grandiose, but uncanny.

'This is the natural fortress which we had to take.'

I nodded, and at that moment I understood all that the Italian and native troops had achieved.

A youthful Air Force officer got behind a machine-gun and demonstrated how they had fired at the enemy in the fighting which took place below us. He was living it over again. . . .

There were no human habitations for miles. Just mountains, rocks, desert. Very occasionally we saw groups of *tukuls* (native round huts) and strips of green; evidently there was water under the surface somewhere.

Again the new motor road came into view. 'Here are the first houses of the men working on the roads'—lonely, simple affairs, apparently built out of corrugated iron. With movements of the arm, my neighbour gave me to understand that he was referring to a big town—'Deben-guina, where we saw heavy fighting round Christmas-time, 1935.' I gave a nod to indicate that I remembered. I looked again at this curious bit of Africa, which from above looks like so much richly-veined marble.

'The river is called the Tacezzo ; later it changes its name.'

I wanted to obtain more information about this, but this writing down of questions was such a tedious business. However, one of my companions, without waiting to be asked, wrote : ' This river is full of crocodiles and hippos ! '—then, for goodness' sake, let's stop up here !

What surprises would come next ? In a short while we should see snow-capped peaks. Suddenly mountain giants came into view, like New York's skyscraper quarter, as one enters the harbour. The same silhouettes—majestic and lofty. Both pictures had a great similarity in my imagination. Something forced me to try and discover some relationship between my impressions of America and those of Africa, although there really is nothing in common between them. Dried-up rivers twisted through narrow clefts in the rocks, to emerge somewhere as sand.

Slowly, the landscape altered, changing into an up and down of mountain and valley, rocks, and ravines—the bottom of the ocean probably gives a similar picture. But we were flying 13,000 feet above the surface of the ocean.

Again the motor road could be seen climbing a mountain slope in a series of hairpin bends, which from this distance looked as though they had been drawn with a sharp-pointed etching-needle. Through binoculars they looked terrifying enough. It was just as well that the areoplane from Dabat, flying to meet us, came in sight then to take one's attention off the road. 'Plane No. 7, which took off from Asmara with us, also came into view.

'We land in five minutes' time ; hold tight like you did when we took off.'

My ears began to sing, and no amount of deep-breathing and yawning made any difference for the moment.

We were to Gondar, a town of which the whole world now speaks. In 1932, there were few people who even knew that there were five thousand native inhabitants, of whom nine hundred were slaves. The slave market here

was held regularly—now the people must believe that they are in Paradise.

What six thousand Italians have achieved here in a few months is truly amazing—hotels, restaurants, bank, post office, shops, etc. Already a delightful residential quarter has been built. If the three Italians who lived here before the war were to return, they would hardly know the place.

The town, however, possesses a character of its own, owing to the some forty churches and castles which have been left by the Portuguese occupation.

A car took us from the aerodrome, which lies a long distance from the town, to New and Old Gondar, which are separated by no less than six miles. The new residential estate with its forty houses was built in a few months, and it certainly looked very inviting. Before long the still sandy slopes will be transformed into green gardens, and the soil, which is ideal, will be highly cultivated. Furthermore, it is intended to build modernly equipped hotels for tourists. In the Abyssinian Baedeker Gondar will be marked by three stars !

The Government offices are accommodated in the big, comfortably furnished 'tents with windows' in the so-called 'Old City.' It is intended that they are to remain indefinitely, as well as the banks, the post office, and other important institutions which form the centre of the town.

This place—it was founded by the Portuguese, and then became a municipal centre of the Amharas, who were considered to be descendants of Portuguese soldiers and native women—which was once of importance, one no longer feels inclined to regard as a town. As chief place in the Province of Asmara, it has made a good deal of progress, but it is still in many ways imperfect. The massive fortress-like castles, enclosed in strong walls, stand there like the scenery of an imposing theatre. Close by, the lightly-built one-story buildings and business premises of to-day look very modest in comparison. However, one must not expect too much in the first stages of colonization. Italy

must allow her empire-building to proceed by degrees, and has cause for satisfaction in knowing that the foundations have already been well and truly laid.

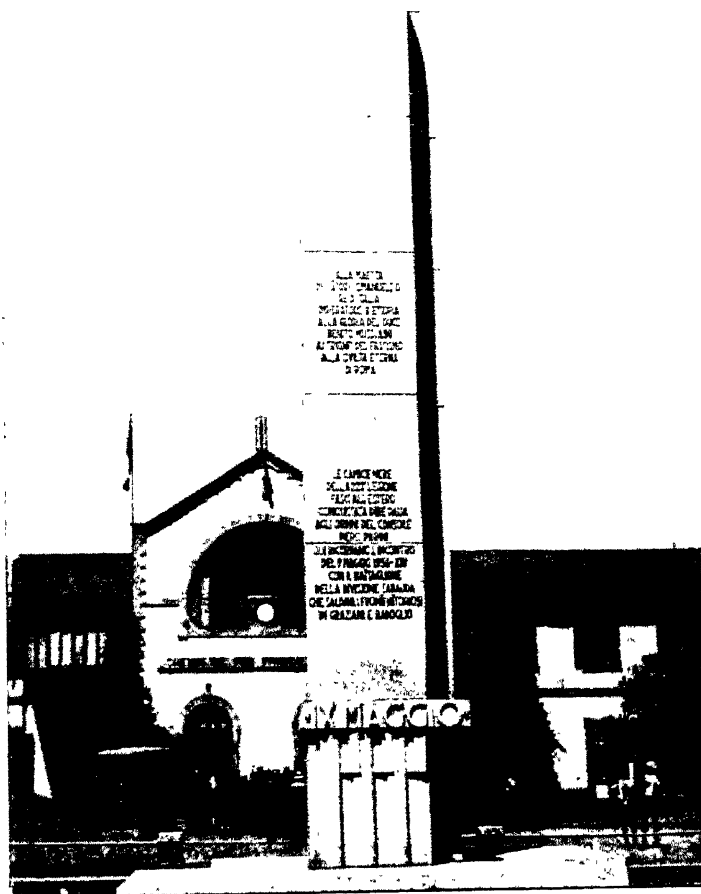
At two o'clock we then flew on towards the south to Lake Tana, twenty-five miles away. At last we were to see with our own eyes this much-discussed 'Deep Lake,' which is said to have a depth of nearly seven thousand feet, which lies six thousand feet above the sea, and whose area is five times greater than that of Lake Constance.

Writers and explorers have reported of it at considerable length—of its importance to the Nile, which Goethe and Napoleon are supposed to have recognized, and of the political key position which it occupies . . . that no one could prevent Italy from using the waters of Lake Tana to make fertile the dry land of Eritrea. . . . Millions of acres by the shores of Lake Tana could be made to bear rich crops. . . . The Japanese wanted to develop giant cotton plantations there, and the Italians will now probably do that themselves. . . . A wealthy Abyssinian Prince wished to have a luxurious steamer launched on the lake, but that was not to be. . . . In the fourteenth century Portuguese Jesuits built dams across the valleys, the ruins of which may still be seen, as can the red signs which an English mission years ago placed upon the shores. . . . The holes, where the water burst through, can also. . . . Indeed, one might interject, who did in the past visit Lake Tana, and did all of them really see what they are supposed to have seen? In the Negus' time very few came here. The few men who, in the guise of big-game hunters or explorers, had a free hand here, and knew how to turn it to account, are known. Since the Italian occupation, it is also not everyone who may choose Lake Tana as his destination; and in any case it is not easy to reach. But those, who as soldiers or in some special capacity, actually set foot on its shores, they open wide their eyes and—keep silent. Not that there is a great deal, or anything particularly mysterious, to see, but rather because big possibilities and plans are not yet ripe for discussion. All theoretical speculations

dwindle and disappear at the moment when sight of the great sea itself holds us in its ban.

We flew for about a quarter of an hour, and then General Laghi, through one of his officers, asked me to take a seat at the second pilot's controls at his side. After a little manœuvring, this was safely and quickly accomplished. The General took a pad, produced a red pencil, and wrote that we were flying at an altitude of 7300 feet. I nodded in reply. Making myself comfortable in my new, privileged position, I kept a sharp look out for the lake. Presently I could make it out—a smooth, blue surface; quiet and peaceful, with no ship or sail in sight, and with low banks, on which no signs of human habitation could be detected—Lake Tana. Here and there I could see thickly wooded islands of varying size. 'Does anyone live on them?'—I asked the General in sign language. He changed course, and made a special little round trip for my benefit, so that I had a good view of several of the islands and the round-shaped chapels which most of them seem to possess. But even with powerful binoculars, I could discover no signs of any living creature. These world-remote islands slumbered in the blue lake, surrounded in historic mystery. They were snatched away from us almost as soon as we set eyes upon them. Seeing them was more bewildering than enlightening, and all puzzles remained unsolved. Was there any possibility of our being able to land on that big island in the middle of the lake? There might be charming nymphs there, who laid their veils in the reeds before taking a morning bath, tasting the secret powers of the fountain of beauty, whose waters become the source of the Nile. We might even come across the stolen veil of the lovely Zoe of Naxos. I was interrupted in my dreams by a signal from the General, and summoned back into reality. On my writing-pad, right in the middle of a clean page, he wrote four big letters and placed after them a bole exclamation mark, '*Nilo!*'

Expressed unromantically, the only stream which emerges from Lake Tana is situated at the spot above which we were



In memory of the historical meeting of the Italian North and South Armies at Diredaia on 9 May 1936. The memorial has been erected in the station square. The inscription reads : To His Majesty, Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy, Emperor of Ethiopia, to the Rome of the Duce, Benito Mussolini, to the triumph of Fascism and to the eternal civilization of Rome.

The Blackshirts of the 221st Legion of Fascists abroad, having, under the command of Consul Piero Parini, conquered Diredaia, here remember the meeting of 9 May, 1936, XIV, with the battalion of the Sabander Division, which united the victorious Graziani and Badoglio fronts.





LOUISE DIEL IN CONVERSATION WITH NATIVE  
WOMEN IN GAMBELA, NEAR THE SUDAN FRONTIER

The temperature was 100 degrees in the shade.

now flying. There would be more poetry in the description : The source of the Blue Nile takes its silvery, snake-like course through fertile land, and we follow its path, which grows wider and wider. Numerous native huts, herds of cattle and green fields now enlivened the picture. The river with its restless curves and clear, sparkling water, resembled a silver ribbon. From our lofty viewpoint we could follow its course for a long distance, and take silent joy in many other observations.

The General now left the course of the Blue Nile and turned in the direction of Bardhar. All details of this small place could already be distinguished. It swarmed with natives, whose fairly large village is quite close to the European part of the town. This was the real Africa. Lonely, close to Nature, far from all civilization.

On landing, we were welcomed, shown round, and taken to inspect the fortification-walls, which were in the process of being rebuilt. We saw heavy stones being dragged along. The post which we had brought with us was handed over. It arrives frequently by air as well as twice a week by the two motor boats which are now in service, and which also deliver food supplies.

Askaris presented arms, and their womenfolk, attracted by curiosity, appeared from all corners. A white woman was among them—possibly the first one they had ever seen. They tittered and drew brightly-coloured shawls more closely about their shoulders.

Bathing here is supposed not to be advisable. Most people are said also decline to eat the lake fish, on account of their many sharp bones. But others stated that anyone who wanted to bathe and eat the fish should do so, and would come to no harm. Anyhow, the idea of diving into the water for a few moments after this hot day was a very tempting one.

The red and silver sunset, mirrored in the silent waters of the lake, was an incomparable, unforgettable spectacle.

We began our return flight in the dusk, between heaven

and earth, between dream and reality and—between past and immeasurable future.

I spent one more night in Gondar. Here, too, lights go out at midnight, and anyone who is obliged to rise at six o'clock in the morning has to do so by candlelight. At seven o'clock a car would be waiting to take me once more to the flying-ground.

\* \* \*

It was delightfully fresh shortly after sunrise. I was sorry to say good-bye to this place so soon. At last night's dinner how charmingly the Governor's wife had decorated the table in the German colours and with the Party *Hoheitszeichen*!

What was the cavalcade galloping in my direction? The Governor, riding at the head of a squadron of Askaris, with lances at the carry and with plumes in their fezes, was providing me with an escort for the first part of the journey. A fine sight the men were! The Governor pointed out a lad of small stature and slight build who was following the escort. He was descendant of King Theodore, and was being schooled as a jockey. His father, who is a prince still living, has always been regarded as a friend of Italy.

I wanted to stay much longer, and learn much more about the place, but the machine was waiting.

Again a vast expanse of rock, appearing like a great sea with huge waves hurled up by the wind.

Wild Africa!

#### WHERE THE QUEEN OF SHEBA BATHED

##### *Aksum.*

I believe that travellers in Italian East Africa would be well advised to select headquarters in the principal cities, and to make trips from them, despite the fact that it is often very tiring to have to undertake long journeys and carry out important tours of inspection in a single day. But against that many disadvantages would be missed,

particularly that of securing accommodation in the smaller places, which is often very difficult. The local Residents, as one would expect, are extremely hospitable, but not all of them as yet can spare a room for a guest.

Travel upon the new asphalt road, which was extended from Adua to Aksum as long ago as October 1935, is very pleasant. On the outward route I propose to pass Adua, and inspect this small, but important historical, place late in the afternoon, on my way back. When that has been done, there will be time to see the narrow Gaschiorki Pass, where severe fighting took place soon after the commencement of the Abyssinian war.

I mean to stay a few days longer in Aksum, the ancient capital of Habashat and Holy City of the Copts, although the principal 'sights' in this once large and prosperous city can be comfortably inspected in a couple of hours. Gondar is characterized by the unique Portuguese castles, which for centuries have placed their mark upon the city, Aksum by the Egyptian monoliths, which still survive after many thousands of years and stand guard by the tombs of the kings. Every day and every hour the natives see these monuments of the once important Kingdom of Aksum, but there is not one in possession of information about them that has been handed down from father to son. For more news about them it will be necessary to wait until Italian historians have been able to gain positive facts, not only about the origin of the city, but also about the epoch in which Rome and Aksum had close ties as allies.

It will probably be exceedingly difficult to gain historical data in support of the claim that the Queen of Sheba stayed in Aksum and bathed in the little '*Aqua del Capo*' lake on the hill-side. The Abyssinians have unshaken belief in it, and remember with childlike pride the 'mother' of their stock. But any amount of respect for the Queen's swimming-pool does not prevent them from doing their washing in it! I had to take a snap of that! Afterwards I went back to the city to see, especially, the Church of Mary of Zion.

High members of the priesthood appeared in the main doorway of the church, and came towards us. All wore long, dark cloaks and tall, white *birettas*. We exchanged greetings with much ceremony and politeness. The Italian Resident requested one of the native priests, who apparently held high rank in the Church, and who acted as interpreter, to ask the Bishop to grant, by way of exception, permission for a German authoress, who was the first to set foot in the Holy City of the Empire, to enter the church.

For a few moments the priests conferred among themselves, while they kept their eyes turned away from me. Then the Bishop quietly announced that no woman might enter the sacred precinct, although he particularly regretted it in the case of myself.

But that did not bring with it the breaking off of our conversation, which continued for a time in very lively form, so that presently I plucked up sufficient courage to ask the Bishop, through the interpreter, to grant my wish to see the richly-jewelled crown, which is guarded as one of the Church's greatest treasures.

Again there was an interval of quiet discussion, at the end of which the Bishop sent one of his priests to fetch the crown.

He carried the relic, concealed under a white cloth, slowly and solemnly through the big church forecourt which I could see through the door where we were standing. He placed it in the hands of the Bishop, who removed its double covering and revealed the costly golden crown with its two lions in gold and a figure of St. Michael. Under the ceremonial, gold-embroidered red umbrella, he approached me. At that moment bright sunshine fell upon the sacred gems, and my eyes rested upon these and then upon the narrow head of the high Church dignitary, whose fine and noble profile attracted interest. His were the features of a man of virtue, austerity and high-mindedness. His hands were fine and exceptionally delicate, and it seemed to me that they trembled slightly as he reverently and silently placed the uncovered crown in my hands—the crown

which he wore only during services held on very special festivals.

I renewed thanks for the granting of my request, for I was conscious of the awe which had seized all who were present, and was sure that the priests also were aware of the reverence which we ourselves felt. This quietly situated House of God, in sacredness second to none in importance in Abyssinia, once a Greek temple, which was later dedicated to Christ, was concerned in many happenings of miraculous character, which may be read in the 'Ancient Book of Aksum.' This basilica, laboriously constructed with huge stones, also contains the Table of Laws of the Coptic Church, the Holy Scriptures on parchment bound in gold, historical books of the Kings and other legacies, relics, and sacred objects, chief of which is the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary.

At the door of the House of God, surrounded by his servants, I was also permitted to see this treasured possession. The small, tripartite altar picture had been painted in pale colours on a golden background, and was of delicate charm. I felt a desire to touch it gently with the tips of my fingers, and so establish physical contact with something which drew my reverence—an instinctive feeling which probably explains why so many adherents of different confessions kiss the object of their veneration, or always carry it with them.

How long our stay at this sacred spot lasted I could not say. I could have imagined no more beautiful place than this big, open church forecourt in which to dream. On my right, standing close together, were four age-old, ruined columns, which formerly might have supported an altar. Here all the Kings of Abyssinia, with exception of the last Negus, were crowned. What is of greater interest now is the question whether the King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia will add another to the historic memories of this place and allow a State ceremony of unique importance and impressiveness to take place here, far from the eyes of the world.

New-Italian Aksum is by no means so far advanced as many other small towns in the land. At the time of which I am writing, only about a hundred and fifty Italian workmen and approximately fifty families were living here. No church, cinema, hotel, Fascist headquarters, or café was to be found, and hairdressers, tailors, delicatessen and pastry shops were totally non-existent. There was no telephone and no wireless in the Resident's house, since there was not sufficient electric current yet to go round. But this city, situated seven thousand feet above sea level, possesses a delightful climate and charming surroundings. There is a doctor and a hospital, and the natives—there are twelve thousand of them, of whom four hundred are priests—live in peace and happiness. The Italian families resident here have no cause for complaint, and they are full of praise for their male servants. The women, on the other hand, are dirty and in consequence of very little use. A well-trained servant earns a wage of two hundred and thirty lire a month, on which his family can live in comfort, for the average allowance for food is one lira per person per day.

Before leaving Aksum I should like once more to visit the Church of St. Mary and its ancient forecourt, where, on 30 November, between twenty and thirty thousand pilgrims from all parts of the country will gather to spend—as is the custom each year—the important festival at this sacred site. Not far away is the *Piazza del Obelisk*. This square indeed has a magic power of attraction. I looked and found the place where, in December 1936, a monolith was uprooted, transported with special care to Massaua, and from there shipped to Italy. On 28 October 1937 the people of Rome were able to gaze and wonder at this token of their imperial triumph. Perhaps later one of the sphinxes, which for so long have stood guard by the walls of the Coronation Church in Aksum, will also find its way to Rome?

As we were about to drive away we heard a considerable commotion. Native schoolboys wanted to demonstrate

that they had already learnt something. They recited by heart the Duce's life-story in Italian, with a full list of dates, and then held out their almost white palms for a reward. This morning, on the market-square, they had already offered us their services, but the overseers swiftly scattered them with fly-whisks. Here in Aksum local craftsmen make small Coptic crosses of base metal, which the womenfolk wear on leather necklaces. The overseers took good care that no one cheated us, and the prices which they fixed were accepted by the natives without protest.

What would Adua look like now? It is impossible to form in advance any true picture of this place, which at present is in the stadium of being completely transformed.

On the way we saluted the Memorial of the Fallen and thought of the battle-field of 1896 and the heroes who are buried there.

Roads shaded by acacias . . . in front of us a mountain, which might have been in the Alps . . . many houses of European appearance. Who could believe he was in Africa here? High up on the rocks an effigy of the Duce stood out conspicuously. This natural memorial was sculptured by soldiers when war began.

Tall, flowering euphorbias, a big new bridge, and a row of handsome new houses pointed the way to Adua. We passed women carrying water to their homes. Soon we came to the Albergo Roma and the new cinema. Evening quiet had already settled over the market-place. From this point emerged the newly laid, rather narrow road, which has new houses on both sides of it.

Adua—the name is a reminder of defeat and of ultimate victory.

There were still 125 miles to Asmara, but that was no hardship on a road like this.

Jackals crossed our path, gazing with green eyes into our headlights, as though hypnotized by them, and dodging aside just in time to miss the wheels.

Yes, Africa is the land of the wild cats !



## 'THE MOST INTERESTING ZONE IN OLD ERITREA'

*Cheren, at midday, with the thermometer at 85 degrees.*

I repeat these words—which the Resident of this uncommonly interesting little place had previously uttered, in tones of deep conviction—in my heading of this sub-chapter, although I have since had many occasions of discovering that all Italians, no matter where they may happen to live, in all earnestness regard the place in which they work as the finest, most important, and most go-ahead in all Italian East Africa. On principle I never contradict such expressions of enthusiasm. Nothing is more gratifying than to see how people gladly suffer all manner of hardships and privations, simply because they steadfastly believe in the importance of the tasks which they have been summoned specially to fulfil. Fascist happiness has a different appearance to *bourgeois* contentment. But it is a fine thing when both conceptions are combined.

The road from Asmara to Cheren was not started until after the war. It is still not quite finished, and frequently we were obliged to make our way through watery river-beds because many of the bridges were still under construction.

The whole of this district is much quieter in comparison with that which lies between Massaua and Asmara. The name of the town of Teclesan, which lies twenty-seven miles north of the Eritrean capital, is known to no one there, despite the fact that it has a working gold-mine and is a place in which a church, a school, and numerous stone-built houses have long since been completed.

An hour later we again halted at the first big farm, which has already existed over forty years and is known to every child for miles round. Magnificent tropical fruit ripens here as well as in any greenhouse. The coffee was in bloom, and would be harvested in two months' time. On a tree close by there were oranges. The gardener picked some lemons and other fruit, which although quite green were sweet-tasting. Bananas, which need a great deal of water,

are not grown. This big agricultural undertaking employs a hundred men, most of whom are natives, and sends regular lorry-loads of produce to Asmara and Massaua.

In Cheren, as I have already hinted, it was delightfully warm. The best thing anyone could do was to spend the afternoon on the shady terrace of the handsome Government villa—but I could not afford to sacrifice so much time, and there was a lot to see.

I was sorry to find that the factory was closed at the time. It manufactured buttons which formed an important item in the export trade. But it appeared that all natives were needed for public works—they naturally take preference. Many Sudanese were employed here, for the frontier is close. Here there are five thousand Copts, Mohammedans, and heathens—a mixture of races very different to that in Asmara. I wondered if disturbances occurred, but the iron fist apparently prevented such. The Italians first came here in 1898, and a little later they were in Asmara. They have never had to deal with serious revolts. Before the campaign there was only a handful of Italians ; to-day there are 400.

The market-places everywhere have many points of similarity, but nowhere have I seen house-fronts so gaily painted ; it was as though someone had given overgrown children a free hand in the matter. All the people here seemed fond of bright colours, and most of the women carried red cloths. In addition, I looked in vain for a leather and hide market ; it is not held here. All the same, exporters dispatch large quantities of these goods from the district.

Europeans who live here for any length of time, and like it, must have some special passion which they desire to satisfy. Our host was waiting eagerly for the conversation to come round to this point. In a few days time, accompanied by three Askaris and a number of boys, he was leaving by camel for a three weeks' trip to a remote part in which giraffes and elephants are still numerous. But the purpose of his visit was exploration. Already important water sources had been traced, which later are destined to

supply the needs of Cheren. The project, which is estimated to cost 150 million lire, provides for the building of a reservoir by the Anseba River to hold 50 million cubic metres of water. It is not yet definitely known whether the plan may be put into execution.

If that happens, this whole land area will have a very different appearance, and the various 'concessions' will produce crops as never before. Perhaps then the monks will mount their mules, ride down from their lonely cloister among the rocks at Debra Mariam, and wonder at the change which has suddenly been brought about. I was not able to visit them in their world-remote solitude, since they permit no female creature, not even a female animal, to come near them. They live in the most frugal manner. Several of them have not left the monastery for a generation. Even the new electric suspension railway, which, besides the railway for natives, operates regularly between Agordat, Cheren, and Asmara, and on Sundays runs 'National Trains' at specially reduced prices, is unable to induce these hermits to seek society.

\* \* \*

I decided to put in a quiet day in Asmara. There is still a lot remaining that I have to see. The great lands of the Caravanserai, where pilgrims and their animals can rest on their journey to Mecca (*via* Massaua), are well worth seeing. Taking my time, I also visited the new mosque, completed at the end of 1937 on an area of 1150 square metres, as well as the newly erected Koran School and Mohammedan court. I should not have thought that there were only 10,000 Islamites here to as many as 24,000 Copts.

Once more Architect Natoli showed me the plans of the house which is to accommodate the Government offices. The skeleton will be of concrete, the outer walls of a mixture of pumice stone and concrete, the interior walls of the six hundred rooms will be of glass, and the façade will consist of cement surfaced with granite. The building costs will amount to 12,000,000 lire.

Asmara will develop more and more into an ultra-modern colonial city. To-day there are 100,000 inhabitants, of whom half are Italians.

The temporary barracks of the war days are gradually disappearing, and in their place substantial buildings are being erected, at a cost by no means inconsiderable, since all materials must be imported from Italy. As soon as the cement factory at Massaua is able to attain a large production, the present price of fifty-eight lire a hundredweight will be substantially reduced, even if it does not sink as low as twenty-one lire, which is the price in Italy. Within the next twelve months the great Corso Mussolini will be finished as far as the railway station, and along it only dignified buildings are to be erected. Factories and workmen's dwellings are to be confined to the outer districts.

The native quarter is also in a process of transformation. The river, which previously served as a rubbish dump, has been filled in. As yet drainage and water systems are unknown. The worthy mule, loaded with two water-bags, still takes its leisurely way through the streets to be 'milked.'

I like Asmara.

*In Afrika schlafen heisst sterben,  
In Afrika schaffen heisst leben.*

(In Africa those who sleep  
die, those who work live.)

*Decamere, late Afternoon, 14. XI.*

From this journey—I can see that already—I am gleaning, not only a lot of impressions, but gaining also personal profit. I am continually meeting men whose personality and work draw my greatest respect, men whom I look upon as pioneers of a new age. They grew up in Italy in normal circumstances and began their occupations in life like anyone else. But that is hardly a correct description, for these men passed through the school of Fascism, and that rather alters things. I recognize and feel this all the more acutely, since for many years I, too, have lived and worked at this

sharper pace ; I have been in constant touch with Signor Mussolini, and I have kept going with the rest of them. Up till now the pace has been one which nearly everyone could maintain, but here in East Africa they have adopted a rate of march, a *Passo Romano*, which needs not only willing limbs, but hearts in the right place, too.

The name of the youthful town of Decamere, which is separated from Asmara, by twenty-eight miles, was frequently mentioned to me in the latter place, and I noticed that people were attentively following the progress made by this small industrial town.

What is happening here ? On African soil a miniature Detroit is being created on a typically American scale. One might also make comparisons with city foundation in Australia and in other places where skyscrapers have shot out of the ground like mushrooms. But, here in Decamere, there naturally are no very tall buildings—growth is horizontal rather than vertical. I was forced to smile when mentally comparing this broad plain, not so long ago a sandy waste, but now already a town of substantial dimensions, with New York's 'Downtown,' though, perhaps, in architectural style it comes nearer in appearance to Brooklyn.

Decamare as an important junction of roads, which come from Massaua, Dessie, and Asmara, is specially interested in everything that has to do with transport. All the lorries and private cars—and their number is legion—come here for an overhaul. Every automobile concern of any standing has a branch here and a depot for spare parts—the town is like one huge garage. In 1935 there were four houses, but to-day the town comprises numerous quarters, with a population of 10,000 Italians and 20,000 natives (inclusive of small neighbouring places, which have now all been linked up by the extension of building activities). In two years' time it is estimated that 20,000 Italians will be employed here in various occupations. The many stone houses, a cinema to hold 1200 persons, restaurants, banks, shops, and a Fascist Headquarters, etc., which have already been built, give

some indication of the energy and determination which are being applied here. In the main Abyssinian campaigners are chiefly responsible for what has been created here out of nothing. Willing sacrifices have at last succeeded in turning the desert to account.

Side streets and the outskirts of the town have also been greatly developed, and in them a further two hundred houses are shortly to be ready for occupation. Applications for rooms in the hotel which is still in the process of being built mount higher every day. Here it is taken for granted that all new houses will have running water, electric light and so on.

With evident joy and satisfaction, a motor mechanic acquainted me with the fact that one of his friends had just become a father. In recent months there have been a great many marriages. A small hospital, a chemist's, an elementary school for Italian children, and a church are already in being.

On 28 October 1937 the Artisan's Bank began work ; now the cinema has also been finished, and two soap factories are being built, since soap is a commodity which can be more cheaply manufactured here than anywhere else. Very few miles from Decamere there is now an incubator farm, which will supply forty-day-old chicks—at the rate of about 20,000 a month—to an adjoining poultry farm, which is due to be opened in a few months. Here the birds will mature and then find their way on to smaller farms. With this a big step forward is being taken in agricultural development.

I have inspected a number of modern model farms, and had no need to be sparing in praise of them. The Resident of Decamere nodded in a gratified way, and said as we parted : " In a few years' time our city will be the Asmara of to-morrow ; there is nothing to stop it."

Each day brings me to another place in which building and creating goes on at the same feverish pace. I wondered what else was in store for me before I returned to Asmara.

The Resident, a young Civil Servant, just back from his

honeymoon, whose first guest I was, thought for a few moments.

"If you would like to see something quite special before you leave Eritrea for Ethiopia, you could hardly do better than travel on another twelve or thirteen miles to Mai Edaga. Eleven months ago it was just a patch of desert. To-day it has great hangars, in which Caproni has built modernly equipped workshops for overhauling aircraft in Empire service. Italian specialists are also training men, whose previous experience of engineering had hardly gone beyond taking a bicycle to pieces. Ten thousand parts go to making an aeroplane, and five thousand working hours are needed for a thorough overhaul, which is generally necessary after two hundred and fifty flying hours."

The journey, by new road, lasted rather less than half an hour, at the end of which time the settlement suddenly became visible, like a *fata morgana* in the desert.

The manager of these works, a war pilot and possessor of the Gold Medal, is also anxious father to his 230 employees, who are all fed out of the same kitchen and generally cared for as members of one large family. As a wise precaution he had stored enough food to last for six months. He is having houses built, furniture manufactured, and small gardens laid out. He provides recreation, organizes entertainments, and one of his chief ambitions is to see as many families settle here as possible. On taking leave, I was able to assure him and his wife that this great concern would continue to hold a special place in my memory.

On the return I was notably silent and thoughtful. How extraordinarily full and dynamic is the life of those who here are setting the wheel of a new event in world history in motion. They would be certain to find it very hard to return to their former occupations in Italy, with their monotony, fixed hours, and so on. Here life affords totally different conditions—some pleasant, others not so agreeable. It brings many hardships, but offers in compensation far greater satisfaction, and infinitely more scope, where successful work and chances of promotion are concerned. Men



MODERN HOUSE IN THE NEW RESIDENTIAL QUARTER IN NIASSARA,  
CAPITAL OF THE PROVINCE OF TREFREA





ENTRANCE GATEWAY OF THE DIREDAWA AERODROME, AN IMPORTANT AIR JUNCTION  
ON THE ROUTE FROM DJIBOUTI TO ADDIS ABABA

with a pronounced instinct for creating are here in their element.

The *Strada Imperiale* is a fine wide road, now quite complete. There are shops, photographers, and hairdressers which would excite attention even on the Corso in Rome. Money flows ! In quarters where it is still scarce, makeshift methods are employed ; rough boards go to construct a modest restaurant, and series of empty petrol-cans, with a few strips of corrugated iron for the roof, soon provide the ' Fascist Headquarters.'

The air is not so rare as in Asmara ; breathing is easier, but the temperature is higher. I wondered how the Italian women liked living among a Coptic population. They seem to have everything they need in the way of houses, places of entertainment, kindergartens, schools, good drinking water, and doctors and hospitals. They also have a 'bus service to Asmara, and can do their shopping there. It struck me that I should also like to live here with my family, and lay out a little vegetable garden.

One of the houses particularly pleased me, and I wondered what sort of people lived in it. We rang the bell. A young woman opened the door and expressed pleasure at our visit. With obvious delight, she showed us her beautifully furnished, scrupulously clean home, which was arranged just in the way which is usual in Italy and even possessed an electric cooker. She kept house for her husband and his two unmarried brothers ; next door was their motor repair shop, which they had built out of their joint savings. I wanted to know if she liked living here. She looked at me in astonishment and laughed. That is the way of Italian women ; if family circumstances are satisfactorily regulated, they are happy and contented as a matter of course. Nothing is more foreign to them than the type of American girl who dreams only of fashions, flirtations, and beauty queens.

Decamere—an automobile city ; Mai Edaga—the African Guidonia. Cavaliere Chiesi, the founder and manager of this one and only Caproni settlement, gained a world's record in 1925 with a touring machine. All that he is now

doing is also in the nature of a world record—nothing like it has been attempted before.

Later, when I am back in Berlin, I intend writing to him ; I want to follow the progress of his work—a piece of 'Myself' stayed behind in Africa.

#### IN THE WITCHES' CAULDRON OF DANKALI

*By air to Assab*

Naturally, an *Ala Littoria* passenger machine, such as I used, is much more comfortably equipped than a military aeroplane. It certainly looked as though I should have a much more restful journey.

Everyone had contributed to arouse my curiosity. I was to fly over a country such as I had never seen before and would never see again—the Witches' Cauldron of Dankali, with its terrifying ravines, extinct volcanoes, and fallen-in craters—a veritable Dante's Inferno.

At first we followed the Massaua road, passing above Decamere. Actually the whole of this district is extremely monotonous and barren, vegetation being rarely seen.

My neighbour was reading the *Azione Coloniale*, and asked me if I knew it. Did I not ! Although there were many colonial magazines on the market, this was the first colonial daily paper to be published. It made its first appearance on Rome bookstalls eight years ago.

Where were we?—apparently in the realm of perpetual solitude ! A glacier-like high plateau and rocky summits, on which, perhaps, no human foot had yet been set ; which bore no trees or signs of life ; which, although scorchingly hot, sent cold shudders down our backs—above these we flew, and cared not to dwell on the thought that an emergency landing might be necessary.

How frightful is barren, dead nature. To us, because there is no life there, it seems like a hell. Unrelenting, merciless inhumanity in the compass of Mother Earth. Not even the lakes, which here and there occurred, could soften the picture. To be obliged to spend days on foot, and

possibly alone, in this place must be sheer torture. The new Commissioner of Assab, wanting to make closer and personal acquaintance with his area, which embraces 350 square kilometres and has a population of 45,000 natives and 1500 Europeans, travelled from Asmara to Assab by car. Using the appalling, ancient desert track, it took him and his companions five days. Never again ! he is reported to have said afterwards.

Was this the African chamber of horrors ? From the air the many craters looked like castles made by children on the sands. They had just let them tumble in, and had left them. Broad streams of dark brown lava could often be followed for long distances. Their surface took the form of rolling waves, steadily moving onwards, one day to halt and grow stiff. How long will it be before that happens ?

\* \* \*

After a three hours' trip we landed at the ' desert ' aerodrome of Assab. No other description of it would be accurate. There was not a blade of grass, or a sign of vegetation, to be seen—just the blazing sun. The men were wearing knee-length trousers and short sleeves, as well as tropical helmets—a hitherto unfamiliar type of headgear.

A motor was waiting. By way of greeting an ostrich strutted to meet us. I hardly expected flowers ! Natives carrying fish home to dry—the catch was suspended on long poles borne over the shoulders—saluted us as they passed. The corrugated iron barracks which we saw Italy must have exported by the thousand during and after the Abyssinian campaign. Here, too, they are being demolished, and stone houses are being put up in their place.

The Commissioner of Assab, who arrived here not very long ago from Asmara, where his wife is still staying as leader of the Women's Fascist Association, has taken up his duties with characteristic energy. In a pleasantly cool room in Government House he showed me the new town-planning scheme, which had just been drawn up. It seemed strange that this should be intended with Assab, where before the

war there were only three Italians, namely a doctor, a gendarme, and a Civil Servant (more than fifty years ago Italy was already using Assab as a coaling station). Now there are more than a thousand Italians at work here. The extension of the road to Dessie and that of the harbour (at the southern exit of the Red Sea) has made this place a hive of activity. When the great harbour project has been completed, which will be within the next five years, general development will take another big stride forward.

And so the town-planning scheme has been settled, and the native quarter, with its 7000 inhabitants, situated two miles from the European quarter, has already been newly laid out. The electric light plant is already operating, and at great cost water has been brought from far away to still the thirst of this arid city (Assab has an exceptionally low rainfall; in the last five years not more than a couple of drops have fallen). By the end of 1938 the city will be unrecognizable. By then, work which began some two months ago on the extension, or, more accurately, the building of a protection wall, 250 yards long, to prevent the wind from perpetually whipping up high waves in the harbour, will be far advanced. Eventually, it will be possible for approximately a hundred ships to berth simultaneously in this 90-100 feet deep natural harbour, instead of, as now, being obliged, a few at a time, to lie at anchor outside. When the harbour scheme has been finished, that is in 1942, the trade port of Assab, which is closer to Addis Abeba than Massaua, will make tremendous progress, while Djibuti will still further lose importance.

All this is so easy to say, and yet it is costing huge efforts and enormous sums of money. The harbour scheme alone will consume 170 million lire, the main road to Sardo will swallow another 313 millions, and railway building will work out at 2 million lire a kilometre. As cheap labour is obtainable from Yemen and the Sudan, it is hoped that these estimates will not have to be exceeded.

I have grown so African and have become so bitten by the fever of building and creating, that I could not resist the

temptation to ask what other plans were being visualized. In order to obtain better impressions on the spot, we went for a drive round in an open motor furnished with a sort of sun-awning. It was approximately a cross between a third-rate 'bus and a delivery van, but a remarkably practical means of conveyance, bearing in mind the condition of the streets, the heat, and the wind.

A little way outside the town we came across a large number of barrack-like structures, in which contingents of labourers are temporarily housed pending their drafting to the various labour camps. Here they attend lectures and receive preliminary instruction. Massaua has not yet made similar arrangements.

The town of Assab as it exists to-day is quickly inspected. Who desires to build now can get a plot of land free, but in a few months' time land is going to cost twenty lire the square metre. The measure is designed to prevent price inflation when the Imperial road and the harbour have made further progress. Assab does not wish to surrender the advantage of being a cheap city.

Among the main road there are several handsome villas which have existed there for years, and smaller stone-built houses. A Palm Garden containing 10,000 plants—we should call it a 'botanical garden'—is shortly to be given over for free use by the native population. A hospital, as usual with two separate wings, is being built, and will accommodate 350 beds. An hotel is also taking shape. Water supplies, which, although not exactly insufficient, are not plentiful, will—and this is a matter of particular pride to the Commissioner—in under two years be able to satisfy every need. Eleven miles from the town, they have discovered a lake—I must see that.

It would have been better had I said 'No.' Admittedly, it was an interesting experience to travel personally along the wide road, laboriously constructed with hard lava stone, first planned a year ago and now complete for a distance of several miles. On our right was the desert, on our left the sea. That, indeed, was interesting; but I might have

spared myself a grim hour of clambering along stony river beds, under a scorching sun, with a temperature of 100 degrees, and have avoided ruining a pair of shoes. However, I saw the lake, Dankali's main source of water supply, lying almost hidden from view, on whose banks a small labour camp has now been erected. Was this the 'pond' that was capable of providing worthwhile quantities of water?

"Formerly, Assab used fifty tons of water a day; now it gets 350 tons. In a few months the quantity will be increased to 3500 tons daily, and two years hence it will be as much as 10,000." These figures genuinely surprised me. They meant that later potatoes and vegetables would probably do well, and that the whole city scene would undergo a change.

Assab is also in a position to start factories for canning fish, and so create an important local industry (these lobsters!). Perhaps, in a year's time, it will be possible to put this plan into execution. In 1936 would anyone have thought that there would be a supply of electric power? Despite its hot climate, this port of such high importance to Italian East Africa will not only catch up with Massaua and Djibuti—which themselves are not over-blessed with fresh, cooling breezes—it will eventually pass them, that is when the road connecting Assab with Dessie and Addis Abeba is finished and the projected railway line (it is intended to build a branch line to Diredaui, which will have a capacity of 7000 tons a day) also crosses the 'Dankalian Inferno.'

I could not have chosen a better time than the present for my travels in this ancient, and yet so youthful, country. The old conditions are still universally recognizable, but the turn is already being made, and a vast field of vision has opened before me.

When I arrived at the Assab aerodrome, I was not expecting to find so many interesting and important developments, whose progress will have such a great effect on Italian East Africa as a whole. I am leaving this evening by steamer for Djibuti, feeling very satisfied with what I have seen.

## THE 'COFFEE MILL'

*Djibuti, French Somaliland.*

Already I have used almost every method of travel, and have rejected none that was offered to me. This evening I leave by the Abyssinian Railway, the 'Hippopotamus,' or 'Coffee-Mill,' as it is known, for Diredaua, which is the half-way station for Addis Abeba.

I suppose no railway line in the whole world has been the cause of so much talk during the last few years as this one, begun in 1897 and successfully finished thirty-three years later. It remained until 1936 in the joint ownership of the Negus and the French Government, who helped to build it. Travel was only undertaken during daylight, and in consequence three days were required for the 500-mile journey from Djibuti to Addis Abeba, parts of which are up a stiff gradient. It must have been a happy-go-lucky and at the same time a not-altogether happy undertaking, since all manner of interruptions and breakdowns were a regular occurrence.

Traffic and traffic receipts of the Ethiopian railway were at their highest just after the war ended in 1936, at a period when Italy also had an interest in the company. At that time there was an average of thirty-six trains a day. But by autumn, 1937, work on the road from Addis Abeba to Massaua had so far advanced that Djibuti and its railway, if not quite dispensable, at least were not so necessary. Nearly all goods are now transported in Italian lorries on Italian-built roads. The railway is now practically only used for the conveyance of passengers, who find the restaurant-cars and sleepers a great convenience.

To-day the journey to Diredaua (170 miles) occupies twelve hours. The fast extra train, made necessary by the large number of passengers arriving by the steamer, left Djibuti at five o'clock this afternoon, doing the journey to Addis Abeba in twenty-six hours, stopping only once, at Diredaua, at two-thirty in the morning. I had no wish to



arrive at that hour. I therefore reserved a 'sleeping compartment' in a slow train, which reached Addis Abeba in thirty-eight hours, and probably did not have a new engine, like one of those recently imported from Italy, harnessed to it.

Sleeper with wash-room attached—that sounded all right ! The whole train consisted of two white, quite comfortably fitted, coaches for first and second-class passengers and two third-class coaches for Europeans, several aged, dark coaches for natives, and various luggage-vans. My compartment, containing three well-upholstered *couchettes*, which could be raised or lowered at will, was the only one left. Rugs and pillows were being wheeled along the platform for those who wanted them.

Passenger fares, now that there are Italian directors on the board of the 'French-Ethiopian Railway Company,' have been substantially reduced. My ticket to Diredaoua cost 235 francs, in addition to a supplement of 178 francs for use of the compartment of *couchettes*.

The engine gave a whistle, and the journey started. The departure and arrival of trains are events very popular with the natives of Djibuti, for there is little else in the way of excitement in this port and capital of French Somaliland. Admittedly, the old French colonial city is a much more developed town than either Massaua or Assab, but no number of brick-built houses, cinemas, hotels, or shops can aid us to find here anything like the energy and enthusiasm which are so evident in the Italian towns. They merely represent useful buildings and sources of profit, and have nothing to do with national life in the colony. Of such there can be no talk, for in the whole of Djibuti there are only about two hundred 'real' Frenchmen, most of whom are Civil Servants or employees, whose residence there is only temporary.

These facts must be fully recognized if the real difference between the French and the Italian conceptions of 'colony' are to be understood. France has possessed Somali for several decades, has never been able, and has never wanted,

to make herself at home there, and the country has never really be conquered by the efforts of the nation.

French citizens in France read in the papers what revenue has been produced by the tax imposed on foreigners, each of whom has to pay port dues, amounting to twenty francs, as soon as he sets foot ashore at Djibuti, even if he intends leaving city and country immediately afterwards.

But the Italian at home is not confronted with information of this kind in his newspapers, nor would it be likely to interest him, for he is in direct touch with everything that happens in the Empire. He follows all the plans of development, which to-day are drawn up and to-morrow are put into execution. He is aware that in Old Abyssinia there were only 425 miles of railway line (from the frontier of French Somaliland to Addis Abeba), that there are 190 miles of railway in Eritrea and 70 miles in Italian Somaliland. He takes satisfaction in the recognition that Italy is adopting a policy, where transport and communications are concerned, which would justify nobody in reproaching her for being too Francophile. Italy in East Africa has no need, and does not desire, to be in any way dependent upon the favours and graces of any other nation.

The journey continued in the direction of Addis Abeba—a journey by 'Coffee-Mill' into the coffee country.

#### I FORWARD MUSSOLINI'S GREAT GIFT OF COFFEE TO THE WINTER RELIEF FUND

*Diredaau, in the Ghebi of the Negus.*

I arrived here, after a sleepless night, feeling rather tired, but was told that "the coffee for Germany is ready to send off"; and that information quickly dispelled all hopes of rest. There was plenty now to occupy the mind. I hurried backwards and forwards from warehouse to warehouse. It was very warm, and it began to get dark, but I had forgotten all about my tiredness. Early in the morning the coffee would commence its journey, and then there would be

telegrams to send to the generous donor, Signor Mussolini, and to the German Chancellor, Herr Hitler.

\* \* \*

Joyful anticipation of the coming event cost me another sleepless night—a sleepless night in the Negus' apartment and bed in the Ghebi at Diredaau, where the Italian Government lodged me. I believe, too, that the Negus, in the days before his flight, spent more time awake than asleep in this room ; but the thoughts which kept me awake were happy ones.

A splendid morning greeted me when I rose. Once more I went to the store-rooms of the *Societa Coloniale*, to have a final glimpse of the native girls engaged in sorting coffee. They squatted, about twenty of them, on a veranda built outside the store. Each had in front of her a bag containing 160 lb. of coffee. She took from this a quantity of about 8 lb., placed it in a large sieve, and shook this about until the bad beans could be detected and extracted. The rhythmic movements of the slim, pearl-bedecked girls were fascinating to watch. They smiled at me and showed me just how to hold the sieve in order to attain the desired results.

Each girl can sort a bag of coffee in a day and receives a wage of six lire. The coffee handled here is the best which Harar produces, and on the world market it is quoted as a high grade Mocca. It grows in the fertile valleys of Cercer, which are protected from the wind and yet enjoy a pleasant breeze. (This coffee is also grown on small plantations run with native labour.) There are two sorts, known respectively as black and white coffee. The beans of the white coffee are smaller, but more aromatic, and they swell when they are roasted. The agricultural concessions also comprise coffee plantations of modest extent.

Everything was ready. The last bags were being placed by strong men's arms on to the lorries, ready to leave for the station. Quite an imposing column it was ! All lorries bore the notice : *Societa Coloniale Italiana—Caffe dell'Impero—*

*Harar*. Signor Pellas, one of the directors of the Company, greatly pleased me by making me a present of a brand-new coffee bag, which I am keeping as a souvenir. The full bags were beginning their long journey, *via* the Red Sea to the North Sea.

There is a story about this consignment of coffee. Like many other fine things, which subsequently grow into great things, it began with a casual idea, a thought, based upon the friendly relations which unite Germany and Italy. That was more than a year before. The Duce, to whom I mentioned the idea at the time, at once adopted it, and in the most cordial and friendly manner put it into practice. Some time later I received a letter from the Italian Ministry of the Colonies, which informed me that the Head of the Italian Government had given instructions that, if practical ways and means could be found, a considerable quantity of coffee was to be sent as a gift to the German Winter Relief Fund.

But it was still too early for this splendid plan to be carried out. In the Empire in those days peace had hardly been established, and there were innumerable obstacles provided by such things as the lack of vehicles, roads, and means of transport. Then, after a personal talk, and brief correspondence about the matter, an official of the Italian Colonial Ministry wrote, 'Go to Italian East Africa, and fetch the coffee yourself; that is the only chance at the moment.'

The moment I received that letter I made up my mind to seize the first available opportunity of going to Italian East Africa, and of accepting the Duce's present in palpable form and forwarding it to the Winter Relief Fund.

However, between cup and lip. . . . Another whole year passed before I was able to be here, in Diredaui, in the land of coffee.

The lorries began their journey. The occasion attracted quite a lot of notice, and the many people who were about could read, on a placard fixed to the leading lorry, that this was a '*Transport des Kaffees von Harar, Geschenk des Duce an*

*Frau Louise Diel für das Deutsche Winterhilfswerk.* (Transport of coffee from Harar, present from the Duce to Frau Louise Diel for the German Winter Relief Fund.) An Italian schoolboy was among those who stopped to watch, and I tried to explain to him what it was all about. Whether he grasped it, I am not quite sure. He asked me if I knew his Duce—at that moment how clearly Mussolini's picture appeared before me ! Before I started my trip to Africa, he

*1  
Hierher Kaffee  
100 Millionen Kilo  
doppelt gut schmecken*

*Mussolini  
Rom 21 Xhe XVI*

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI SENDS COFFEE FOR THE  
GERMAN WINTER RELIEF FUND.

received me once more, and for the first time mentioned the quantity of coffee which he had in mind—2000 hundred-weight. A hundred tons ! I must have looked rather blank when I heard this high figure mentioned, for the Duce quickly took my notebook, and wrote boldly the quantity, so that there could be no mistake about it.

Now the 'Coffee-Mill' was to live up to its name, and carry our present speedily and safely to the boat.

I felt both relieved and happy. Now I could concentrate all my attention on this commercial city, which played so important a role in the Abyssinian War. Already I had noticed the memorial on the station square which commemorates the meeting of the North and South Armies here on 9 May 1936. What a stroke of good fortune that the troops were able to reach Diredaua so quickly ! It was due solely to that circumstance that this relatively prosperous town, with its great goods' stores, and commercial houses, passed into Italian possession as the only one on the Southern Front to escape destruction by Abyssinian rioters.

From the Ghebi I had a fine view of the two cities, Dire and Daa, and of the native town of Magalo. The river, now dried up, separates Magalo from the European quarter, which has already been considerably built upon. It should be remembered that a fair-sized French colony, with interests in the railway, has been established here for many years. Actually until 1937 there was a French battalion stationed in Diredaua, which quietly withdrew in the spring of that year.

It was a disappointment to me to find that the only cinema in the place had not yet been opened. It is being built in the new Fascist Headquarters, 'Casa Littoria,' on 'Empire Square,' and when finished will have seating accommodation for a thousand persons. Building of this imposing edifice was begun five months ago by a group of Young Blackshirts. Those engaged upon it worked from early morning until late evening, often with the aid of car headlights, and did it without remuneration. The colonnaded corridor, 34 metres long, is supported by many heavy granite columns. From the entrance-hall, which has an area of 170 square metres, one has access to the cinema and theatre, the offices and the Hall of Commemoration, which is dedicated to martyrs of the Fascist Revolution. The furniture, imported from Rome, is also a present to the Italian colony in Diredaua, which numbers 1500 persons.

The aerodrome has now received a most unusual and imposing entrance gateway. It has been formed with heavy

cement walls, which have an appearance of giant wings, in the centre of which is the drive-in.

It is possible that by March 1938 the cement factory will begin work, at a time when the only big fruit and vegetable farm (comprising 1500 acres), which possesses its own well, should also be bearing its first crop. I should like to be there to witness these things, especially as the climate at this altitude (3900 feet) is extremely agreeable and the cleanliness of the city—what a contrast to Djibuti !—and, not least, the excellent cuisine of the Hôtel Italia make a stay so pleasant.

But I have to be moving on. 'My' coffee will soon be afloat, but it will not arrive home before me.

#### IN THE CITY OF THE EIGHTY-SIX MOSQUES

*Harar, Mid-November.*

We arrived here late in the evening, in the bright light of the stars, by car from Diredaaua—37½ miles distant—after a tiring journey over rough roads. I was conducted to my lodging. A big iron gateway opened in the centre of a stone wall, and the door of a small house stood open. My luggage was quickly brought in, lights were switched on, an appointment was made for the following day, and then we said "Good night."

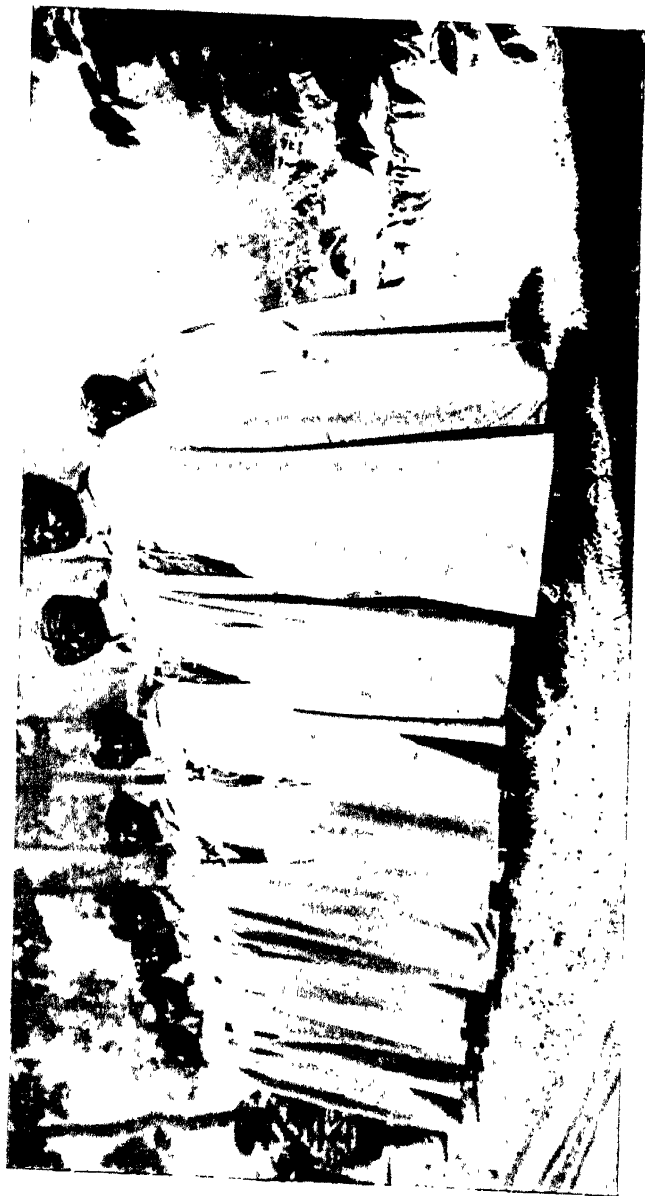
I had a look round and observed that I had a small 'apartment house' to myself. It was quite newly built and intended for guests of the Government. Opposite there was another, larger villa, also within the protection of the same wall ; I wondered if it were occupied. Anyhow, it was in darkness. It was not long before I, too, put my light out. There was nothing I wanted so much as sleep. These student travels in Fascist *tempo* are most exhausting.

Suddenly I was awakened by strange noises of a distinctly uncanny nature—long-drawn-out howls, which made one shudder. They were punctuated by the barks of frightened dogs. For a while there was silence. I listened, and again the hideous sounds struck my ear. Nervous ?—not a bit of



EMPEROR MENELIK'S MAUSOLEUM IN ADDIS ABEBA





**THE MAGNIFICENT SOMALI GUARD OUTSIDE THE VICEREGAL PALACE.**  
The picturesque uniform consists of a sky-blue, silver-embroidered cloak, a red turban, a red silk tunic and white jodhpurs.

it ! But at the same time I was alone, and in strange surroundings. I wondered if they were jackals, who often dared to approach quite close to the houses, or just hyenas, who were not quite so venturesome. I wondered also whether the howling would come closer. Apparently not. But who could sleep while it lasted ? Fortunately, I remembered the ear-pads, which I used to deaden the noise of the aeroplane engines. I felt for the light, but it would not go on. Luckily I had a pocket torch handy. With the aid of this I fumbled about the room and at last managed to find my overcoat pocket and the pads. After that, I got back to bed. In the meanwhile two o'clock had struck.

“ You will discover that Harar is a strange city ; there is no other like it in the whole of Ethiopia.”

That was what the Duce told me, and consequently I had greatly looked forward to visiting it. Asmara is a modern city, also with its Mussulmans, mosques, and native quarter, but it lacks a particular Islamitic culture and originality. On the other hand, Harar, at an altitude of about 6000 feet, city of the Caliphs, surrounded by an ancient wall, with its Mussulman school, its eighty-six mosques, and age-old gates of ‘ Justice,’ ‘ Health,’ and ‘ Conquest ’—Harar, the old centre of the Faithful and the Prophets, is a world to itself, abounding with fables, ancient traditions, and holy legends. Here the Arabs and Egyptians have left their tracks ; Somalis and Gallas were in occupation, and here, finally, by force of arms, the ‘ Great Menelik ’ of the Abyssinians made his victorious entry in 1887. Barely fifty years after, the Italians liberated the city from the Abyssinian yoke, for here, as everywhere else, the warlike Amharas had sorely oppressed and stripped the Gallas.

A tour through the narrow, twisting streets of the old town makes a delightful and yet strange impression on the visitor. Handsome, brightly attired Somali women pass on their way to the well to draw water. They laugh and converse in various dialects, which are related to Arabic. The Cottu women wear their jet-black hair in thick coils in the nape of the neck, and cover it with a black veil. Standing flat

against house walls of the narrow streets, the natives allow European cars just to scrape past them, and do not stir a feature. In a remarkably short time they have quite accustomed themselves to the novelty of motor traffic.

On chilly mornings they wrap themselves in their 'Shamas,' and shiver. The men form groups and patiently wait for their white foremen and overseers to march them off to work. Some are employed on the new 148-foot-wide main road—along which the Government Palace, the Governor's house, a large hotel, the club, Fascist Headquarters, and etc., are being built—and others are engaged in house-building. They break stones, shift soil, and even take on tarring and rolling, at which they are already quite expert. Four thousand are earning their living in these occupations.

The new plan, drawn up by the Government, when completed will transform the city into a luxuriant garden, filled with gay little singing birds. On the hillsides outside the walls European residential estates are growing up in a green setting, and, a little farther away, freshly cultivated fields of fruit and vegetables are ripening. Here the Italians have at their disposal large areas of land which formerly belonged to the Negus. Several Italian ex-combatants have already settled on the land, and they proudly showed us their holdings and offered us pears and tomatoes. Hundreds more, who wish to follow their example and settle here, have sent in applications. They are doing pioneer work on fertile, but previously uncultivated, soil. They are discovering how deeply one may dig and what kinds of grain and perennial plants will do best. They also hope soon to be able to gain valuable oil from the wild olives. The second harvest of grain is now being carried. The Italian authorities take an active interest in everything, and it is expected that the new State experimental fields, laid out close to the city (with cotton, coffee, tobacco, bananas, sunflowers, potatoes, etc.), which will be harvested this year for the first time, will give valuable results. Vegetables, of which small quantities are already regularly sent to Addis Abeba and other places,

will then be produced on a big scale, cattle will be kept in bigger numbers, and a State poultry farm will be started on a site just over a mile from the city.

It hardly seems possible : in Harar, where, in July of the previous year, there were only three white women, nearly 2000 Italians have now settled down, and there is not one who has any desire to leave this city and its fine climate. The Bank of Rome has built for its employees a small tukul settlement with community mess-rooms and social halls, and other big concerns are doing the same. In the Fascist Headquarters, where there is a continual coming and going, the housing question not unnaturally is the most urgent, and all those who can afford it, do their best to find accommodation in one of the new ' People's Houses,' which consist of from two to four flats. The natives, whose number is estimated at 23,000, will be lodged in three new native centres, in which Somalis, Amharas, and members of the other races will dwell in separate district compartments.

Two pretty Italian typists arrived with us to take up their work in the Government offices. Before long, perhaps in three months, they will get engaged and will soon marry, and others will have to fill their vacant posts. That is going on all the while.

" This evening we'll let you have a sample of the bread which, as an experiment, we are now making by using 70 per cent wheat and 30 per cent Dura (which resembles maize). You will like it. Until we are able to grow enough wheat locally, we must make the best of what we have. Also, we'll send you three cakes of washing soap, representing different varieties, which we manufacture in our new soap factory, only from materials which are produced on the spot. By way of experiment, we are also making bricks, since these work out much cheaper when there are no heavy transport charges to be added to their cost." That was what I was told by the Commissioner of Harar, the interior of whose office nearly bore resemblance to a laboratory. From the outside it is continually besieged by hordes of natives, who come to him seeking advice about all manner

of subjects. They are like big children, in need of a father's help.

Curiously enough, only five picture postcards of this interesting city were on sale. They appeared to have been published soon after the war by persons of very limited knowledge, for I read on them, 'Harar—Somali.' Beyond the native huts, one or two old streets in the centre of the city, with mosques and minarets, and, finally, the Governor's Palace (the former Ghebi), no illustrations were to be had of this old city, in which Ras Makonnen, father of the last Negus, lived. And yet there are viewpoints and places which would fascinate any painter, and buildings, like the Mausoleum of Ras Makonnen, unfortunately not completed, and the modern Italian ones, which deserved to be photographed from every possible angle.

The Province of Harar comprises seven districts, under commissioners, which again are sub-divided into areas in the charge of residents. General Nasi, the Governor, is an energetic and capable soldier and administrator, whose personality has made a great impression on the natives as well as the European members of the community. In the course of a conversation he emphasized that he was particularly anxious not to be in too big a hurry. His aim was to settle a thousand families in groups spread over the next few years. The State would not be prepared to support them; they must be in a position to take up useful work immediately on arrival. This is a matter that must be considered before emigration takes place, otherwise too great a burden would rest upon the State.

I have visited the native school and that for Mohammedan children, which, founded five years ago, has only recently attained importance. After that, the son of a high dignitary of the Coptic Church—he was very well read and a good linguist—showed me some well-preserved frescoes in the covered walks of the old monastery courtyard. They remind one in their primitiveness of the drawings in stone in the Roman catacombs, only that here, instead of the fish, the lion is the important symbol.

Last night I decided to desert the Governor's hospitable table, and dine somewhere in the town. We went by car, got out in the main street, and continued on foot through dark, narrow lanes, where natives passed carrying paraffin lamps. All suggestions which I make on this 'expedition,' and all wishes to see this, or hear about that, are invariably willingly agreed to. It has not yet been my experience that anything has been rejected, or described as impracticable—my instinctive suspiciousness would quickly have warned me of any such attempt. Knowledge of this causes me deep satisfaction, since it is my desire to gain objective impressions, which are my own and not those which I have been influenced to receive. I want to see what I came here to see, not those things which other people think I ought to be shown. If there is something which interests me—things noticed in passing, or people I see in offices and shops and elsewhere—I am not afraid to ask people about them. In this way I learn much, and pick up such a variety of information about details, that many Italians express astonishment and are curious to know from which sources it was obtained. In recent months I have been constantly on the move; all the time I have been gaining new impressions, which I compare with each other, and whose truth I confirm or disprove by making countless inquiries. Consequently, no one can deceive me; indeed, I am in possession of more facts and more complete information than individual gentlemen, hardly one of whom has travelled so far as I.

And so we dined at Bottone's, the only restaurant that could be considered. It was opened a short time before by an ex-soldier. The stone floor was uneven; there was no menu; everything was makeshift. Nevertheless, it was reasonably satisfactory. Naturally, no comparison could be made with Diredaia, or for that matter with Asmara, but on the other hand, Harar is the ancient city of the sheikhs and of the 'Prince of the Faithful.' It is equally the city in which, twenty years ago, the British secret agent, T. E. Lawrence, spun the web in which the Negus eventually became entangled.

## I TURN FROM THE BEATEN TRACK

*Giggiga, close to the frontier of British Somaliland.*

It is tiring, often very so, to make regular entries in my diary as I go along. But if I stop doing it, it is clear to me, even a few hours later, how quickly the many pictures, impressions, and conversations intertwine, and how hard it is to disentangle them afterwards. Each district has its own countenance and its special problems, and even the landscape often takes an entirely different character after a few miles.

Yesterday's trip from Harar to the village of Graua, in the Gara Mulata Mountains, and to-day's, which again took me from Harar to the small garrison town of Giggiga, are good examples of this.

Graua is a native settlement isolated in the mountains. The 90-mile journey there and back along worse than rough roads occupied a full eight hours, and was a gruelling experience. The panorama was impressive, but desolate and depressing. The gentlemen in Harar were perfectly right when they suggested that I should not undertake the trip alone. Several dark forms crossed our path, which did nothing to inspire one's confidence. Gloomiest Africa!

When we arrived there, the whole tragedy of the life and death of the Emperor Lij Yassu came to mind once more. From June 1933 until his mysterious death in April 1936 he led a wretched existence in the fortress prison, in which he was confined. At his disposal were two small, lofty rooms and a bathroom; to-day not a stick of furniture remains. He was permitted to leave his prison for an hour a day, and on Sundays to visit the Coptic church, which he himself built on the same hill as the castle in which he was being held. Guards and spies closely surrounded him. Nobody was allowed to approach him, save the women of his harem, like himself, suffering from venereal disease, who were at his disposal in any number, and contributed their share in completing the destruction of his already broken health.

How his end came is a matter upon which the few who really know maintain absolute silence. There are in Graua eye-witnesses who relate many details of Lidj Yassu and his life ; but not a word about his death has been dragged out of them, despite all the efforts that have been made to get them to speak. What became of the body is also a complete mystery. They say that towards evening, on the day of his death, a car drove up to the castle, apparently to remove it ; but where it was removed to, no one knows.

Did the forty-year-old Emperor die of dropsy, or was he poisoned or stabbed? In his death-chamber a small red cloth covers a cross signed on the wall in blood. Nearby, one can see several marks which daggers made in the wooden wall ; and bloodstains can be detected on the floor. Here hired assassins are supposed to have finally liquidated the defenceless man, who, nevertheless, showed bravery and, indeed, mortally injured one of his assailants. As a last silent testimony of the fact that he had not turned Mohammedan, as rumour reported, but died a Christian, Lidj Yassu drew this small cross in his own blood—that is the generally-accepted interpretation of what happened.

With horror I turned away from the castle on the hill and the barred windows of this house of death, which no good spirits are likely to inhabit.

We then took lunch with the four Italians at the modest Residency (no electric light or running water), which they occupy alone. There was not even a wireless set or a gramophone. The men were satisfied with cards and a bottle of good wine. Opposite, on the castle hill, an Italian officer was drilling his squad of Askaris. He showed me the memorial stone which was put up to commemorate the entry of the Italians in Graua on 19 May 1936.

Graua is the only place among the many I have got to know so far in which I should not care to live. Despite the mountain air and fine views !

\* \* \*

Giggiga. I looked out of my window on the first floor and saw the parched garden of the Residency ; but my



eyes also sought the wide plain in the distance, upon which the growing town is rapidly spreading out. Big drinking troughs for cattle have been built, and an agreement with British Somaliland has regulated grazing and watering rights for the Somali tribes in territory lying both sides of the frontier.

The 'slaughter-house' is in the open, and its site can be easily detected by the vultures and other members of the sanitary squad which circle in the air above it.

The Commandant maintains iron discipline. So close to the frontier—Berbera is only 190 miles away—this is absolutely necessary. It took some time before all felt the curb-bit and yielded to it.

The Somali women at the skin and hide market stared at me speechlessly—that despite the fact that there are 400 Italians here, many of whom have their families with them. The women often ride with their menfolk, and in general life here is not unpleasant, especially as there is always a fresh breeze. And no one could desire anything better than the new houses and other amenities which the State has provided.

"To-morrow I'm going to our last station before the frontier, Busano, where I am meeting the English," the senior military officer, a colonel, said to me. What were they going to discuss?

"Many members of tribes, who live in a constant state of feud, are continually wandering from Italian territory into British and vice versa, especially in cases where they have been punished by the courts in one place and hope to be better off in the other. The cases are individually examined by ourselves and the English, and we meet for the purpose once a month, alternately on the English and Italian sides of the frontier. That's what we have been doing since July 1937. The British show goodwill towards us, and we towards them, and we both take full account of each other's points of view—you see, a letter has just come in."

He handed me the envelope, which was boldly headed, 'On His Majesty's Service.' Its place of origin was given

in the bottom left-hand corner : ' District Office, Hargeisa, British Somaliland.'

The Italians write the name of this place ' Giggiga,' in the way I have given it. Somewhere or other I have read ' Dschischiga'; and now the Britons write ' Jijiga.' Of this selection, which is the poor foreigner to choose?

The return journey was delightful. Again we saw natives acting as living scarecrows, in the trees, waving their arms to keep the birds off the fields of Dura. We again also passed the many ant-hills, pointed and brown, like broken tree-trunks. These, incidentally, are not found at altitudes exceeding 4000 feet.

As we turned the last corner we looked down upon Harar, and saw the minarets silhouetted against the deep-blue evening sky.

#### ASBA TAFARI BECOMES ASBA LITTORIO

*Again in the Negus' Ghebi.*

In honour of Ras Tafari, later Negus Haile Selassie, there was founded, in 1925, in the fruitful district of Cercer, a town which to-day proclaims Littorio's fame and is inhabited by 4000 natives and 100 Italians. As this is an expedition, taken either from Harar or Diredaua, which claims several days, if a thorough inspection is to be made, it is seldom included in the itinerary of travellers in Italian East Africa, no matter whether they come for the purpose of study or pleasure. So my arrival was in the nature of a special event, and I was given the best room in the big Ghebi, which the Negus, when he stayed here, used as a bedroom. Certainly never before have I slept in such a large apartment. Its many non-curtained windows open on to a big veranda, which encircles the room like a gallery and apparently serves as a popular promenade. In the morning, therefore, I was obliged to dress behind closed shutters by the light of a candle.

The journey here in the company of an exceptionally interesting and intelligent man, who has now been in Africa

for two years, was most entertaining. He writes to his mother in Naples every day, never missing, and speaks to her by telephone whenever opportunity offers. Naturally he is homesick, but at the same time he feels he can never leave Africa—a dilemma in which so many find themselves. This awkward state of mind often has very strange effects, which are simply written down to 'African liver.' Many sufferers talk incessantly of how much they look forward to leave, and when the opportunity arrives they find themselves utterly unable to make up their minds to travel, and a thousand excuses are found for postponing the date. At the root of it is fear that something might happen to prevent them returning to East Africa, although they feel they must take the journey for the sake of happiness and health. It is assumed that every European, if he can possibly manage it, should spend several months in his third year on home leave. The rule is this: In the first year a man settles himself down, in the second year he speaks and dreams only of leave, and in the third year he achieves his ambition. My companion is right in the middle of the second stage.

But that did not prevent us from paying attention to the many interesting natural spectacles which the journey afforded us. We passed large numbers of cattle, noticed monkeys playing in the trees, and saw that the corn was ready to be carried. Frequently Dr. P. would observe in a serious tone: "This is where I lost one of my best friends in the war," or "We camped for some time near this wood." War scenes, still fresh in his memory, were constantly turning up.

On reaching Deder, where we had lunch with a very amusing party of officers, and witnessed a *fantasia* performed by natives, we had covered sixty miles. At home we should need a bare two hours for such a journey, but here, even on the best of the old mountain roads, it is impossible to average more than twelve to thirteen miles an hour, and during the rainy season travel is only possible by mule. Frequently large mule caravans force one to slow right down, since the animals are extremely timid and liable to bolt.

Thoughtful caravan leaders cover the mules' eyes, or turn their heads to the side of the road, away from the cars, so that they do not see them pass.

The little town in the valley is as quiet and secluded as a Swiss mountain village, but will soon be turned into a great granary to receive the rich harvests of corn from the surrounding districts. The delicious 'Pearl Coffee,' which is harvested in March and October, grows at heights between 3000 and 6000 feet. The soil is also ideal for growing bananas, corn, and vegetables. About twelve miles away is the land, which, early in 1938, was to be handed over for group settlement by 105 colonists of the *Puglia di Etiopia* Corporation (Ethiopian Puglia Corporation). Each of the colonists is to farm 375 acres.

General N. and his family gave me the kindest of assistance and showed me everything which Asba Littorio and district had to offer. The General drove part of the way to meet me, and then showed me the tennis courts, the forest, and Cunni. A good deal of progress has been made here in road-building; the General has explained to the natives that they are doing this work, not to please him, but in order that they themselves may reap the benefit of it later.

Are there Alpine valleys more beautiful than this one, or mightier mountain masses than the Monte Mutar and the Hirna, which lay before us? Only seven hours by mule—there is no other means of getting there—separated us from Valo Galetti. I should have enjoyed that ride, especially as it would have enabled me to visit members of the Italo-German mineralogical society, the S.A. Mineralia A.O.I., who live there in utter seclusion.

But the virgin forests called! Here, 8000 feet above sea-level, we were surrounded by luxuriant tropical vegetation. I could have spent hours here, wandering on foot, dreaming and listening to the song of the birds. . . .

At Cunni the men had arranged tea, cakes, and cigarettes on a gay check tablecloth in the straw hut which the Vice-Resident uses as a reception-room. A few steps away was the tennis-court. I had no difficulty in realizing that

inhabitants of the little town popularly selected this place as a picnic rendezvous.

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF ADDIS ABEBA

*Addis Abeba, 23 November.*

Although the rainy season is long since past, it rained in torrents when we arrived this morning from Diredaui by air. That was the first surprise. Since then, I have made a fairly comprehensive tour of the big city, visited the German Consul-General and several of the Italian authorities, cast an eye through a great heap of correspondence, inspected the new native village, and dined excellently in 'Jacob's' German restaurant.

At last I am in the capital of Italian East Africa. I have feelings of relief similar to those which Goethe knew when he reached Rome safely after a long journey. Certainly, everything that I have seen up to now in this country has been extremely instructive, but nevertheless I counted the days which remained before I should be able to get here. Now I shall have a chance to unpack thoroughly—for the first time.

My diary lies ready to receive first impressions; what does the place look like? But no town in the whole of Italian East Africa is more difficult to grasp and visualize than this—metropolis! Although it covers a large area, and has a large population, the layout of the city and its division into numerous small settlements, which resemble a chain of suburbs, make it very unlike a capital such as we are accustomed to know. Indeed, all European comparisons would be out of place here.

At present I am not concerned with town-planning schemes, or interested in any problem of that kind. I want first to get acquainted with the life of the city and to discover its special characteristics. But how difficult is that, for here no unbroken line unites the many different parts. In uninterrupted succession I am presented with separate pictures of the most contrasting kinds. All are contradictory

to each other—this house is African, old, tumbledown, and the next one is Italian, new and modern ; next to them is a corrugated-iron shack, due to be pulled down. A native gentleman, riding a tired mule and followed by running servants, is overtaken by a dozen luxurious cars. Red and green traffic lights and electric signs flash, but the natives calmly stroll about the roads as they might in some quiet village. Messengers deliver telegrams ; modern shops display and sell their goods on the pavement ; words and music roar out of huge loud-speakers, and lorry follows lorry—that is the big city. But if you turn the corner, there you find natives squatting by the roadside, ridding themselves of insects, dozing, lazing—that is the real Africa.

Addis Abeba, the old-young city, which is being built up, and pulled down, displays a two-sided face, a changing countenance, which is revealed in the following brief sketches, which show both the light and the shady sides :

It is a city spread over a large area.	Consequently you cannot get about without a car.
Wide, new roads.	The roads are 'up' everywhere.
Enormous amount of traffic.	Many motor accidents.
Coptic churches by the dozen.	But all are closed.
There are paths for pedestrians throughout the centre part of the city.	Natives invariably walk in the roadway.
Houses shoot up like mushroom-rooms.	Sorry, let long ago. . . .
Everyone has a decent job.	All want to get rich quick.
There are numerous good restaurants.	You cannot get a seat in any of them.
Electric lighting system.	Ours at home has broken down again.
Many good shops.	What you want, they generally have to order.
Interesting native work.	Examples of genuine old work are not to be had anywhere.

The natives are good-tempered.	You talk; they nod, having understood nothing.
Agreeable day temperature.	At night it is as cold as in winter.
You can dress as you like.	Those who do not wear a woollen body-belt risk injury to the health.
Everyone thinks of leave and home.	All want to come back here.
Riding, car drives, new life.	Homesickness, discord in the soul.

Fifteen thousand Italians are supposed to live here. Not counting the soldiers and workmen. Many civilians here are engaged in occupations entirely different to those which they had at home; they take what they can get, and trust in what to-morrow will bring. Entirely different points of view are held here; no one worries unduly about the future—everything will turn out all right. Life, circumstances are the best of improvisers.

The aroma of the thousands of eucalyptus trees is sharp and refreshing, and it suits this city, in which an easy-going, happy-go-lucky existence is not practicable. There are very few omnibuses in service; people who find taxis too expensive must walk and lose valuable time. In the evening it is necessary to keep alert, for nearly all the pavements are in the course of construction. It means one has to walk in the road, and with the huge volume of traffic that is not entirely without its perils. The number of motor accidents is probably greater than in other big cities. I myself was involved in one before I had been in the place eight hours. If life and all works of development rush on, the motors do not lag behind—speed is in the atmosphere.

Many people hold that if you live for any length of time in a place, you get to know pretty well all there is to know about it, or at least know more about it than other people. But that, as I have frequently had occasion to confirm, is a great mistake. To live in a place and go about one's occupa-



LOUISE DIEL INSPECTS THE BIG CAPRONI AIRCRAFT  
FACTORY ERITREA





The Coptic Bishop of Aksum allows the costly golden crown, with its two lions and figure of St. Michael, to be brought out of the Church of Mary of Zion, which no woman is allowed to enter.

tion in the same, daily, monotonous fashion, is not the best way of broadening one's vision and of adding to one's experiences. How often I have turned to 'local experts' for this or that piece of information—for instance, whereabouts in Addis Abeba is the new native village with its two hundred model *tukuls*? But there isn't such a thing, is the answer, if there was we'd be certain to know about it. As they have no idea about it, and have no part in the general development, save in so far as it affects their own small sphere of activity, all the new amenities, which grow up at their side, simply do not exist where they are concerned.

When, after a lot of fruitless inquiries, I at last succeeded in discovering the new *tukul* village, and returned well satisfied with what I had seen, the Wise Men shook their heads, and could not believe it. Out of ignorance, and with no wrong intentions, they paint false or, at least, imperfect pictures, and suffer no pangs of conscience as the result.

The world certainly is small! I was asked if I should care to see the new film at the '5th May Cinema.' What was it? None other than the German film, *Der Vogelhändler* (The Bird Fancier).

The market is not held again until Saturday. In the meanwhile I shall study a map of the city, get to know my way about, and then have a look at the recently unveiled memorial stone in the Fascist headquarters, which has been placed there in memory of Sanctions. I shall not repeat the experience of this morning. I searched and searched outside the St. George's Cathedral for the Menelik Memorial, until it finally dawned on me that the Italians had pulled it down. As a part of the magnificent Coronation ceremonies at the beginning of November 1930, which at the special wish of Haile Selassie were carried out after the English pattern, in the presence of a large gathering of European princes and high officials, an equestrian statue of the new Empress's father was then unveiled. Barely six years later the man, recently crowned amid such pomp, withdrew into private life in London.

November here is looked upon as the Abyssinian spring,

so in this respect, too, I have arrived opportunely. The races are also being held now. But in the evenings, there is no doubt that the garden of the newly opened restaurant, 'Weisses Rössl' (White Horse), will be deserted; it is much too cold out there.

As in Asmara, I shall put extra rugs and coats on my bed before taking a final look out of the window to find the Southern Cross and see instead—the Polar Star.

'BRAVE COLLEAGUE'

*Wednesday, late evening.*

Incredible! Not a single foreign journalist or writer is at present in the country. The Italian Press colleagues—there are about ten of them—have it to themselves, and now, to their great surprise, a woman has come among them. That had to be celebrated! Beautiful flowers, a carefully chosen menu, champagne, speeches—and again many kind references to the German colonies of yesterday and to-morrow.

"Aren't you afraid to travel alone?"

"Mussolini told me I need have no fear—he was right."

"How are you standing it?"

"Better perhaps than many men—pardon! I am on my legs from six in the morning until late at night, every day, and then I go home and write."

"Are you thinking of staying in Addis Abeba now and of returning to Djibuti later?"

"Not a bit of it! I'm off on voyages of discovery, especially in West Abyssinia."

"But you'll have it much harder there. There are some bad malaria zones."

"Do you imagine a German woman travels without her own private chemist's? But I haven't yet taken a single tablet, and even the insect powder hasn't been touched!"

"Then has everything gone according to wishes up to now?"

"Absolutely, barring motor collisions. I've had two of those already, but I managed to get away with it."

"Do you find your health can stand the climate?"

"I find that the air here is most invigorating. One has far more energy here than at home. The brain is always alert and receptive, and it is a surprise to me that one can keep going so long."

"Have you been to Entotto yet? That's where the Abyssinian Empress formerly lived."

\* \* \*

It is quite near, and a splendid view is obtained from it. In one of the three Coptic churches there a service was taking place behind closed doors. I heard the chanting of the priests. Later I also saw the military fortifications on the hill close by. But the wind at this altitude (10,000 feet) did not encourage one to prolong the visit.

\* \* \*

"When the last Negus flew from Dessie, he returned to Addis Abeba *via* the Entotto; that was shortly before he finally left the country. But won't you visit our new Press Clubhouse, where we can talk at ease? It is to be opened in a fortnight's time."

"Unfortunately, I shall be gone long before that. Think of the programme still before me."

"In some respects we envy you, in others we are sorry for you. Do you always travel alone?"

"That is all dependent upon circumstances and the advice I get. I always decide to be guided by that, though at the same time I do not sacrifice my freedom of movement. The Governors and their staffs give me the most valuable assistance, and without that I could hardly carry out, or would wish to undertake, this rather strenuous journey."

"As first woman to travel through Abyssinia with the pen!"

"Quite right, but not as first woman to travel through

Abyssinia in the saddle ; that was done years ago by a German woman, Frau von Eschwege."

"That's what I call an achievement. What actually is the object of your journey?"

"To give the German people a true account of conditions in Italian East Africa and to bring home to them what the Italians are achieving here. For that reason I must also occasionally leave the beaten track and speak with members of various nations. I want to obtain a clear, objective picture ; that demands perseverance and a good deal of self-denial. I forgo many things which would give me pleasure ; my whole time and energy are at the service of my task."

"Bravo ! brave colleague. May I, as a memento of this delightful evening, write a few words in your diary?"

"With the greatest pleasure—please pass it round."

\* \* \*

The book came back, and there I read :

'To you, gentle and courageous colleague, who travel along the roads of the Empire, the Empire won with the efforts and blood of Mussolini's Italians, our heartiest and warmest welcome ; the more so at this hour, when the hands of Italian and German brothers join, when hearts unite and rifles stand side by side for to-morrow's fame.

'Heil Hitler ! Greetings to the Duce !

'CARLO MILANESE,

'Director of the *Corriere dell'Impero*.'

'To remind you of the evening spent among the journalists in Addis Abeba. It is our wish that Hitler's Germany may in the near future return to her African destiny.

'ARTURO BIANCO,

'of the *Popolo d'Italia*.'

‘ To the Germany of Hitler, *volenti nihil difficile est*, with the wish to return this welcome visit in a fine, fruitful, and German Africa.

‘ EMANUELO DEL GIULICE,  
‘ Head of the Press and Propaganda  
Bureau in Italian East Africa.’

‘ In the hope of repaying this visit in your colonies ; and as I am an old man, you must hurry.’

Signature illegible.

‘ Rome—Berlin, an axis of Krupp and Ansaldo steel.

‘ Hearts likewise steeled.

‘ Both flags on the axis, hoisted in Africa, can cover many fine territories.

‘ SERGIO BARNACCONI,  
‘ *Giornale d'Italia*.’

‘ I should like to go one better,  
But I am old and cannot—  
The syntax is lacking,  
But I do not retreat.  
I am one of them :

‘ CUCCERI PIETRO,  
‘ *La Stampa*.’

‘ *Unicuique suum*. . . Livio del Luca

‘ *Corriere del'Impero*, and Carlo Cambriri.’

‘ Hearts high !

‘ Walking through the new Imperial streets of Rome, we met one day, sharing the same enthusiasm and faith, mutually thrilled by the Fascist life which radiates here—I an Italian, you a German.

‘ Then I confided in you a dear, secret wish. I cast my eyes towards the tropical zones of another shore. Remember it, and do all you can to fulfil it.’

Signature illegible.

'May what you have seen through open eyes of the great work of development in Italian East Africa also be of service to German colonial thought and to the re-establishment of the Colonial Empire.

'G. FRICKE,

'German Consul-General in Addis Abeba.'

#### SCAREMONGERS AND SCANDALMONGERS

##### *Addis Abeba.*

It is as well that I did not arrive here quite a greenhorn, but that I had already some idea of a certain type of colonial chatter and scandal, which one might describe as an 'African Product,' or at least a product of 'African Liver.' One could simply disregard it, for such talk really does not deserve serious attention. On the other hand, it frequently forms the basis of those malicious rumours, which sometimes find their way to publicity and then become treated as though they were genuine and true. For that reason it is not possible totally to disregard it.

I have recently found amusement, when a rumour has reached my ears, in immediately thoroughly investigating it. A certain individual, for instance, took delight in claiming that there was serious fighting with rebels in the close neighbourhood of Addis Abeba, namely along the old road at the village of A., and that in consequence the road had been closed. From what source did he gain this information, I wished to know. The man looked offended, and declined to give it. "Have you been there and confirmed it?" I further insisted. My only answer was a look of mingled horror and indignation. "All right, I'll drive out there this afternoon and let you have a report later."

I went. I reached the village in question and took a look round. Everything was peaceful and quiet. Then I called on the Resident and asked him what was going on. He had returned a few hours before from a visit of inspection to a neighbouring place and had neither heard nor seen

anything out of the ordinary. Then who started this talk ; something must have caused it, I observed, anxious to hear his opinion.

In order to save petrol, he explained, the Viceroy some little time ago put a ban on week-end motor trips. Accordingly, after midday on Saturdays motorists not in possession of a special permit were turned back as soon as they reached the city's boundary. Although the reason for this measure had been made generally known, it became, nevertheless, a starting point of the wildest of rumours, which eventually were coloured in the most fantastic hues and went the rounds.

In themselves, as I have already suggested, such items are unimportant, but since they serve the purpose of hostile elements to kindle flames of mischief and create a false world opinion about the state of affairs in Italian East Africa, thus enfeebling the position of the Mother Country, they must be stopped. It is, therefore, a fortunate thing that the Press and Intelligence Services have been considerably strengthened. Soon this muttering in the dark will cease.

Often the affair is humorous and harmless ; when that is the case one can look upon its amusing side. We hear that the English take thick sticks and smite the natives with them—that is what their own compatriots living here say ! Others say that the natives are holding on to their goods and that no more skins and hides are reaching the markets, an assertion which is abundantly disproved by the export figures. Again, Italian aircraft are frequently shot down by natives (if that be so, how is it that they did not have more success in this direction during the war, and why have I, who often fly myself and am constantly having conversations with airmen, not found any traces of it?).

Enough of these sufficiently transparent fables, which, however, go to prove what effects African heat is capable of having on persons with little self-control.

One would imagine that the positive progress of events would in the course of time cause these mischief-makers



to repent and alter their tone—but what else would there be to chatter about in Addis Abeba, where so little happens ! And so heads are put together, and the same popular and inexhaustible subject is discussed time after time—will the Italians do it ? For instance, would they manage to complete the road from Massaua to Addis Abeba during the dreaded rainy season ? It was impossible ! But it has been completed—every inch of it. This silences the bleating critics for a time, while they look for another, more promising, target for their criticisms. And even when all the roads and towns have been built, and industry and agriculture flourish—we shall witness that one day—even then those people who cannot exist here without scandal will continue to find willing and unwilling listeners who will credit their stories.

#### A GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE WITH RAS HAILU

Several former reigning Abyssinian princes changed over to the Italian side during the campaign, and later took an oath of allegiance in Rome before the Duce in person. But none of them, either before or since the conquest, has enjoyed such popularity as Ras Hailu, son-in-law of the last Negus. On many occasions in recent years I have read his name in the papers, and now, quite unexpectedly, I found myself standing here outside his house. Above a very modest gateway, without bolt or bell, and knocked together with a few boards, there was a wide strip of canvas on which an unskilled hand had painted the name 'Ras Hailu.' The house is situated in the middle of a large garden containing a fountain and garden furniture in a pseudo-antique style. No one would fall into the error of describing this medium-sized villa as a castle.

Ras Hailu is frequently absent from Addis Abeba, and he is always at the disposal of the Italian Government for punitive expeditions, for no one is so well acquainted with these affairs as he and his people, whose experience of dealing with robbers and political bands is second to none.

This now sixty-five-year-old Abyssinian prince, whose youthful spirit and warlike nature have suffered nothing from the increase of the years, returned to his home yesterday, and this afternoon awaited a visit from myself, accompanied by the Head of the Press Bureau.

Ras Hailu and several of his followers, among whom was an interpreter, received us in a capacious room, which served the purpose of receptions. The Ras wore the familiar black cloak, buttoned up to the neck, and white, close-fitting trousers, resembling Jodhpurs. His complexion was light brown, his nose aquiline and intelligent, and his serious eyes instantly stamped him as a prince of a noble house.

He glanced at me briefly out of the corner of his eye; he avoided mine, but I noticed that nothing escaped his attention. With a certain amount of ceremony he invited me to take a seat next to him, on a small sofa. The other gentlemen gathered round us in a semicircle.

Each question which, with the interpreter's assistance, I then put to him, Ras Hailu, after a pause for reflection, answered clearly, precisely, and cleverly. I particularly wanted to know what had caused him to develop a friendship for Italy. In reply, he gave me the following interesting and enlightening explanation.

In 1928 he toured the principal countries of Europe. In Paris, London, and other great cities, he saw many new and fine things—but in Rome Mussolini invited him to attend a military parade. He saw the heavy guns and other modern armaments of the country. It made a profound impression upon him, and he said to himself that a country which possessed such military might must be enormously strong. . . .

He has the greatest admiration for Signor Mussolini, and at the time of his visit felt the full force and strength of the latter's personality. While he was speaking about him, he drew, with vigorous hand-movements, an imaginary picture of the Duce, and his features assumed an expression of severity.



and cleanliness of the city are the two things about it which have remained uppermost in his memory.

He again spoke of the progress which Abyssinia has made under the Italians, and in answer to my question he gave me a number of details. Formerly, natives could only hold their land, everything else they had to surrender, and they received nothing, not even drinking water, free of charge. Now the people are given a chance to work and earn a good living. And now that the new roads had been opened, and communications have improved, how much more work was possible in a day ! He thought for a moment and then added that now, too, the churches would be free from trouble for another ten years ; that the children would be properly brought up and educated, and the sick cared for. One had the conviction that everything he said he himself seriously believed, as the result of careful thought and thorough consideration. and that he was not merely repeating a series of polite phrases learnt by heart. " I have lived under seven Abyssinian Emperors," he said in conclusion, " so I ought to be able to judge the difference between the past and now."

It is Ras Hailu's custom at the end of an interview to offer his guests a glass of champagne and, with it, foaming beer. The Italian journalist with me whispered that I must drink both to avoid giving offence to our host. We clinked glasses. Without doubt that is the first, and last, time I shall drink champagne with an Abyssinian.

Meanwhile it had grown dark, and servants brought paraffin lamps, since the coloured electric lamps hanging from the ceiling had apparently only been placed there as ornaments.

I mentioned to Ras Hailu that I had already visited the church which belongs to him and contains the graves of members of his family, not far from the new Italian cemetery. He acknowledged this by a courteous nod of the head. His features seldom betray his thoughts. He is a proud and, also, an astute Amhara.

That there is activity going on behind his forehead

is proved by the message which, at his dictation, the interpreter wrote in my diary.

#### WHERE THE EX-SOLDIERS HAVE SETTLED

##### *Biscioftu, near Addis Abeba.*

I have often made motor trips from Rome to the new Pontine settlements, and visited the recently-founded towns of Littoria, Sabaudia, and Pontinia, and on each occasion I grew more enthusiastic for the great settlement work which is being undertaken by the National Ex-Service-men's Association.

With the best of wills, no one can possibly say how children are going to turn out when they have only completed their first day at school—this comparison is one which occurs to me involuntarily, for nothing beyond the very elementary stages has yet been attempted. Certainly, the agricultural buildings are here, and crops have been sown and harvested, but at present there is little to be seen of the settlement other than the plans. The first of a hundred settlers' houses is in the course of building. But as this serves as a model for the rest (building costs to-day amount to 31,000 lire, but in the near future will be reduced to 25,000 lire), it is not without great interest. It is a solid, stone-built bungalow, containing three good-size rooms and adequate domestic offices and storing accommodation. Large windows enable good views to be obtained of a really beautiful country-side with mountains and lakes like those in the Alps. As in many other places in Italian East Africa, here, too, there seems always to be a fresh breeze. One feels energetic and well. The only unpleasant feature of the climate is the night frost.

I saw none of the nine Pontine towns in this first stage of their creation. Possibly their development followed other lines, for in their case marsh land had first of all to be reclaimed, while here fertile soil waits to be cultivated. That uncommonly facilitates the programme of settlement, since heads of families, besides helping to build their homes,

can also be making profitable use of the soil. And everything seems to grow and flourish here. The balance-sheet for the first year showed a gain, despite the facts that preliminary costs were very high and twenty-one thousand working days were counted. Each family of settlers will be able to employ between ten and fifteen natives to do the work on the 150-acre farm (the total area of the farms is between 15,000 and 25,000 acres). Church, Fascist headquarters, Dopolavoro office, etc., are to be erected on the side of the hill.

We tasted and approved the fine tomatoes which had been packed in baskets ready for transport to Addis Abeba, and accepted a quantity of freshly-caught fish (fine specimens of the trout family) to take back with us and present to those people who yesterday expressed the opinion that Biscioftu was still a dangerous place that should be avoided.

Personally, I can imagine nothing more peaceful, and in character less African, than this stretch of land, on which thirty-two sorts of grain and all varieties of vegetables and potatoes do well. The first crop of potatoes produced eighty tons, the second sixty tons. The corn harvest is now beginning, and will continue into January. Reaping and binding machines and Hanomag tractors are already here, and the natives, who seem quick at learning, are now able to manage them quite satisfactorily. A mill is being put up.

The cows kept here at present are not good milkers, but fresh blood is being imported from Kenya to improve the breed, for the intention is to go in for dairy-farming here on a large scale. Between two and four hundredweight of fish is the weekly catch, which is sold in Addis Abeba in the settlement's own shop. Lake Hora Arsodi at present alone yields the fish, but later the other lakes are also to be fished.

Drive, willing work, success—with these watchwords, these newly started undertakings, Biscioftu and Oletta, both of which are in the neighbourhood of Addis Abeba, are rapidly taking root and growing. Only a year ago travelling to Biscioftu was equivalent to an expedition into the African

wilds, for then there was no road practicable for motors. Italians and Germans who were then living in Addis Abeba and also knew Biscioftu, speak of those days like grandfathers conjuring up memories of a distant past. All they knew was the little German hotel by the lake, which succumbed in the May revolts in 1936. Probably, too, on their return they would pay a short visit to Oletta, which is reached by a side road.

This is a quite active place, and formerly it contained the Military School, the Negus' pet institution. Now two hundred houses are being built for settlers under the Ex-Servicemen's Association scheme. These are due to be finished in the summer of 1938, and then the village of Oletta will receive an entirely new face. And when that is done, those fertile zones in West Abyssinia, for instance in the Uolle territory, will also be ripe for settlement and by then the network of new roads will be complete.

Biscioftu is high-lying ; in order to reach the lakes, one must climb down quite a long way. But what reason had we for going down ? Bathing ? Several young people were disporting themselves in the water, as if it were the right time of the year for that sort of thing ! When road-making is finished, and the ban on week-end motoring has been lifted, swarms of bathers will come here on Sundays. It will then not be long before the Europeans in Addis Abeba discover that they have their African Wannsee.

#### HOW THE WOMEN LIVE IN ITALIAN EAST AFRICA

*Addis Abeba, after a social gathering.*

This is a question which I have put to myself so often during recent weeks, and, indeed, long before I started my travels, that I ought to be prepared now to supply the answer. But the more one sees and hears, the more hesitant one becomes in forming a judgment, and the women's question especially is one which cannot be dealt with according to any fixed plan.

Society women will probably continue to fulfil their

obligations as such, play bridge and golf, go in for a certain amount of sport, take charge of the housekeeping and share the interests of their husbands and children. This is a list which, according to temperament and circumstances, may be considerably varied, particularly in the case of Italian women, who, no matter how important their social position may be, live firstly and foremostly for their families.

In the colonies, climate and local conditions, which in the country are very different to those in the towns, where again they frequently differ considerably, principally prescribe one's mode of living. Woman is not asked whether she would like to go out and enjoy a change. That simply and entirely depends on what opportunities are offered. She must put up with that. Is it in the nature of the Italian woman to do so, and like it?

I can reply with an unqualified 'Yes.' For the Italian woman is essentially very modest in her demands, homely, fond of children, and of a happy, harmonious disposition. By this I do not mean to indicate a particular 'type,' but draw a general character picture such as it has appeared to me over and over again. This inherited contentment, which passes from mother to children, and sends these following in their mother's footsteps, without paying great attention to the changes brought by time, has in the course of generations formed an extremely stable foundation. The disadvantages of this are clear enough, for it is evident that women, so strongly bound by tradition and setting little store by progress and development, do not quickly feel at home in spheres of life which are entirely new to them. With themselves they transplant their old habits and customs and cling to them until they are eventually forced to recognize that certain changes must be made.

I am obliged to think of my American experiences. There women of other nations, after a year or two of residence, became completely Americanized and transformed, a fact that was amply confirmed by their outward appearance and their clothes. But the Italian women and girls, even those born over there, undergo practically no change



worth mentioning. You can spot them instantly as Italians. No particular intention is responsible ; they simply desire to remain as they were at home, and they do this naturally, as a matter of course.

It will be very similar in the case of the women in Africa, especially as they will be living on their own and not subject to foreign influences. Very gradually, possibly in the next-but-one generation, the 'Italian Colonial Woman' type will form, though by that I certainly do not mean that Italian women will not quickly settle down and make themselves at home.

The colonial home gets Italianized—not the other way about. On that account families do not feel so keenly their transplantation in foreign soil. They merely dig up the home roots, and take these—I may be allowed to make this comparison—like a flower vase (that is their home) along with them. There are travellers who refuse to be separated from their cushions and coffee cups and, in consequence, feel at home wherever they go. Italian women will act similarly, only on a larger scale.

As more families settle in Italian East Africa, so will the dangers of homesickness correspondingly decrease. Only where circumstances force parents to be separated from their children, possibly in order to allow the latter to enjoy the benefits of higher education somewhere else, will the serious danger exist that the mothers, especially, may press for repatriation and, if that be not possible, may stay and be unhappy. I have already come across a case of this, in which the marriage was in peril of being shattered.

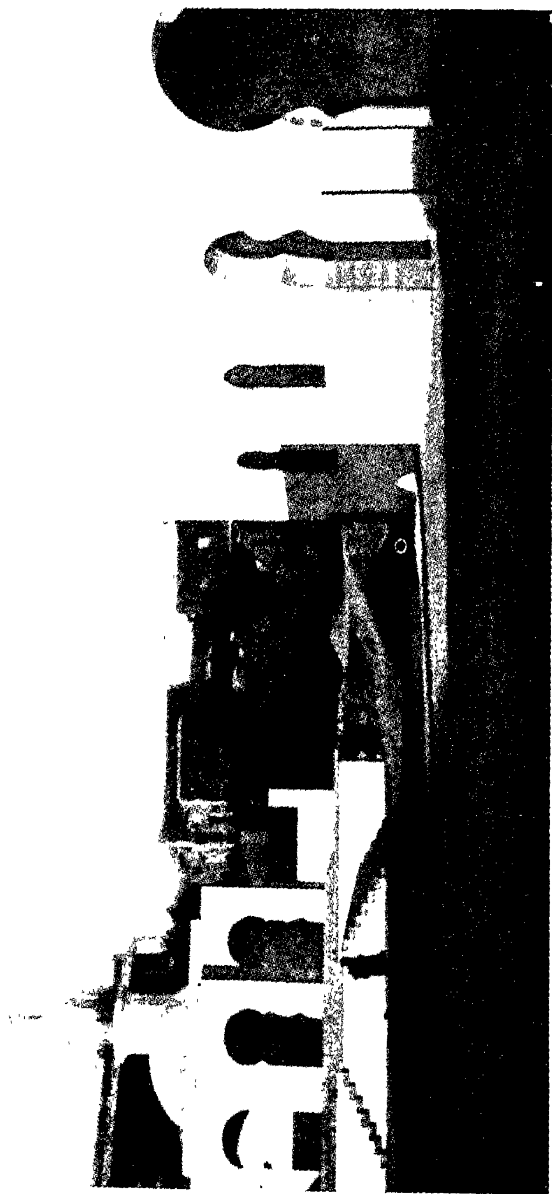
Italian homes in the Motherland are generally modestly furnished, and servants possess little training. In most instances they are country girls from large families, who enter the service of a city household until the time comes for them to marry. It follows, therefore, that Italian wives are not unduly spoilt. Only in this direction have they points of sympathy with their American sisters.

It is probably only a matter of time before Italian women also learn to catch up with all those duties, which here are



ONE HUNDRED TONS OF HARRAR COFFEE BEING LOADED  
AT DIREDAUA TO COMMENCE ITS JOURNEY VIA DJIBUTI  
TO HAMBURG

The notice on the lorry is in German : ' Gift of Harrar coffee from the Duce  
to Frau Louise Diel for the German Winter Relief Fund.'



THIS CHARMING LITTLE MOSQUE WAS BUILT IN HARRAR AND  
OPENED IN DECEMBER 1937

ery much in the fore, but at home were hardly necessary. As hotels, restaurants, laundries, and many other amenities of everyday life can only be established in the course of time, especially in the small country places, where, in any case, there will be an insufficiency of them, households must be prepared to be independent of these. The Italian woman in the colonies no doubt will quickly accustom herself to receiving numerous visitors in her home and at her table, and in helping and advising them in their present needs.

For years I have felt at home in Italy. I frequently stay here, and I have made many friendships in that country which I value highly. But I have never had so many opportunities for getting to know the private family life of the Italian woman, and of personally participating in it, as I have had during the present travels. I need hardly say that the German home means most to me ; but there is also a sense of security and comfort about the Italian home which merits the highest esteem. When Italian women have settled down in East Africa, they will be equally happy in their colonial homes.

GUEST OF HONOUR AT A DISTRIBUTION OF MILITARY  
DECORATIONS

*Addis Abeba, 29 November.*

Several days ago, when the invitation arrived to attend to-day's parade of the 1st Colonial Cavalry Squadron and, together with the Commanding Officer of the unit, present the medals, I at first hesitated to accept the honour—as I regarded it. But when I considered that I should be acting, not in a personal capacity, but as a representative of Germany, I felt glad and proud to be permitted to take part in the fine ceremony.

Five hundred men rode on to the parade ground, formed up, and gave cheers for the King-Emperor and the Duce. Then, according to the Fascist custom, the names of those killed during the last police action were called out, the

whole squadron answering, as each name was called, '*Presente!*' (Here!). After that followed the presentation of medals. The C.O. called each man by name. The trooper dismounted, doubled towards us, and was rewarded with his medal and a handshake. Smart men in this regiment can gain promotion up to the rank of sergeant, but not beyond.

I now had a chance to study the features of these Mussulmans at leisure and at close quarters. Most of the men pleased me. Their faces showed a seriousness and self-discipline, and there was lacking that wildness of eye, which I had found so objectionable in the other natives.

I admit that, to begin with, it cost me a considerable effort in bringing myself to pin the decorations, bronze or silver medals, as the case might be, on the hero-breasts of these Askaris. But the C.O. handed them to me, and I had to take them. By the time the third man came up, I thought no more about it, and I began to study the individual forms and faces and compare them with each other.

This parade ground, situated on the outer ring of the city, is also surrounded by the familiar eucalyptus trees. Next to it is the *tukul* village of the Askaris, built in haste and now finished. As is usual, the men live there with their families. They follow the troops everywhere and supply them with food. Often the women take a hand in the fighting, for fear is unknown to them.

Although the Italian officers do not officially interest themselves in the private lives of native soldiers, they make it their business to get to know everything of importance about them. Poultry thefts and matters of that kind are invariably reported to them. The culprits then receive the flogging due to them, and they expect it, counting the blows and reminding the person administering them if he happens to miscount and miss the final stroke. When women are the offenders, the Askaris are made responsible for seeing that they get their punishment.

The stately officers' mess, where we later took some refreshment, is a former Imperial possession, and the bust of

Impress Menel and the old portraits still remain. Actually, I had intended politely to decline the friendly invitation to a glass of vermouth, if only for the reason that my time was strictly limited, but something prevented me. The moment I entered the mess, to my great surprise and delight, I heard the German National Anthem. It was a special surprise, invented by the officers for my benefit, and a gramophone had been borrowed from somewhere. Things of this kind more than compensate for any amount of fatigue, and people at home cannot realize how moving such moments are. The Commanding Officer smiled broadly as I shook hands with him and warmly thanked him. Quickly, I produced all the German cigarettes I had in my bag, and distributed them—for the last man there remained nothing but the empty, though handsome, metal case.

Abyssinian recruits are being examined, selected, and trained in the same manner as that employed already by the Italian military commands in Libya, Eritrea, and Somaliland. Country lads, workmen, and lazybones, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, who desire to enlist as Askaris and earn money, report at the new military village in Addis Abeba daily. Most of them are Coptic Amharas; the Gallas are employed more in non-combatant branches of the Army. They must give two references, who must be men who are already enrolled, must be medically examined, and they must submit themselves and their clothes to a process of disinfection. First they are taken on probation for a period of ten days and drilled by experienced Eritrean N.C.O.s. If they show promise, they are then posted to the infantry, artillery, or cavalry depots. They are fitted with a uniform, and are then allowed to send for their families. After passing a recruit's course lasting two months, the men are then posted to their battalions, brigades of artillery, or regiments of cavalry, as the case may be. Recruits who appear to possess technical talent are singled out, and undergo special training as drivers and dispatch-riders, etc.

The soldiers have every cause to be satisfied with their pay. Besides cash they receive wages in kind (flour, tea,

sugar, oil, meat, salt), and there is no reason why any member of their families should go short.

Between 5 July 1936 and the present time, 16,000 men have been trained in this model camp, and in all five provinces of Italian East Africa there are recruits' depots of similar value. From that one can estimate that a large new colonial army is in the process of being created.

All Italian officers desiring to enter the Colonial Service must first take a month's course at one of these military schools. Since officers give all commands in Italian, that is after the Eritrean N.C.O.s have given explanations in the native tongue, though at the same time giving the commands in Italian, there are no difficulties in this direction; and officers and men come to understand each other rapidly.

At the next Empire Review in Rome, which, admittedly, is not due to take place for several years, the new divisions of Italian East Africa are certain to be represented, and will march past King-Emperor, Duce, and Viceroy along the Via de l'Impero to the strains of the *Marcia trionfale*.

#### A VISIT TO THE CADI

##### *Addis Abeba.*

Ramadan ! The month of fasting is soon to end, and when it is over I shall at last have an opportunity of studying the normal life of the Mohammedan population. For approximately four weeks now they have been celebrating, starving, and spitting, and altogether have been leading a thoroughly idle existence. Their eating-houses are empty, and all that they are allowed during the day is a sip of water. But after sunset, the gluttony begins and continues until far into the night. Amends are then made, and Riad, Achmed, and Habibur regain their vigour. It is amazing with what energetic passivity the peoples of the East observe the innumerable days of fasting which their religion prescribes.

Having been fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of leading members of the Coptic priesthood in the Holy City of Aksum, and having spoken with Ras Hailu, I felt a strong

esire also to pay respects to the Head of the Islamitic community in Addis Abeba, whom Mohammedans acknowledge as their highest civil judge. Without doubt the office of Cadi is only occupied by personalities of special calibre, who are capable of pronouncing wise decisions and have always kept themselves apart from all kinds of political intrigue. The Italians, where this high post is concerned, only suffer men who are fully acknowledged by the Faithful and are acceptable to themselves.

I went to Cadi Califa Said, wishing to hear from him whether, in his opinion, there were points in common between the Mohammedan religion and Fascist ideology.

In his lilac-coloured cloak and turban, and holding in his hand a long staff, he sat before me, slightly lowered his narrow-shaped head, and thought about my question. While he was considering it, his face, fringed with a short white beard, remained immobile. The ability to immerse oneself completely in deep thought, and rigidly exclude the outer world, seems to be one which all priests of the Orient share in common. Is it that the Koran works so strongly in this direction, or is this characteristic more an attribute of race?

This Mohammedan professor—as such he was brought from Cheren by the Italians—naturally regards all problems from his religious standpoint; the Koran to him is everything. What did Roman Fascism mean to him, and how far was he able to follow its teachings?

It was not difficult for the Cadi to explain to me that Mussulmans especially, who under the Amharas knew great suffering and, like slaves, were ‘persecuted, tortured, and downtrodden,’ now felt themselves free and fortunate, since they have been made aware of Fascist justice and the equality of all before the Law. Justice! The Koran and its laws are built upon that very principle. They demand that the hand of a thief should be cut off; that malefactors should be cast into prison, and that adulterers should be slain. Those who mete out such severe punishments must naturally marvel at, and respect, the humane methods of Fascism,



though they may not study all the doctrines of this European ideology.

A few weeks ago the Mohammedan Court was opened by the Municipal Governor of Addis Abeba, and, of course, the Caliph was present. We spoke about it. He, for his part, did not ask me whether I, too, was there, for I happen to be a woman! We therefore steered clear of that rock, and so avoided the possibility of an awkward collision. For a similar reason I refrained from asking whether members of his religion, as well as the Copts, had fear of the 'Evil Eye,' chose honey wine as a love potion, and carried texts from the Koran as charms. I also felt that in matters of faith, which are frequently highly complicated, it would be tactful to keep silence.

And so I guided the conversation into material channels and asked the Cadi why it was that methods of education in the Gimma territory differed from those in the other Mohammedan areas. In that particular part there are no schools in which branches of art and science were taught.

Califa Said explained to me that this would be soon altered. The Italian Government had already founded a Mohammedan high school, in which Arabic, Law, mathematics, and other subjects would be taught. In succeeding years opportunities were to be provided for more advanced studies in every branch of Mohammedan education. Further, it was proposed to build a mosque, in order that the Faithful might at last possess a worthy place of worship that they could call their own.

"Can you tell me how many Mohammedans there are in Ethiopia? What is your estimate of their number?"

"In the neighbourhood of six millions. And we all serve, loyally and devotedly, the Italian Duce to whom we owe so much. Our fellow-believers throughout the world know that, too. As Mussolini has had regard for us, so may he count on us."

I took leave of the Cadi and chose the route through the native village. The men were driving their cattle home, and women were following, carrying infants on their backs. I

ould like to know how many different modes of hair-dressing there are in Abyssinia and whether each tribe has its own. It has already been explained to me that rank butter is rubbed on the head to keep insects away and prevent the sun from having injurious effects ; but no one has yet been able to enlighten me on the subject of fashions in hair-dressing.

#### GUEST OF THE VICEROY

*Addis Abeba, 5 December.*

On this day of glorious sunshine I was invited to tea and dancing at the Viceregal Palace.

I had been there on three previous occasions, for different purposes, and each time the picture it presented was a different one. A week ago, princes of the Coptic Church from all parts of the land assembled in the great hall to report to the Viceroy their decision in future to elect, independently of the Mother Church, an Abuna from their own ranks.

Richly robed priests and monks filled the room, and Zaptieh Guards in their magnificent Oriental-European uniform were drawn up by the window. Suddenly there was silence. The Somali Guards carried swords, and arms were raised in the Fascist salute. Unannounced, the Viceroy, followed by a number of officers, silently entered the room.

We have often seen pictures of this tall, soldierly figure, with the head of a thinker, forehead of an artist, and chin of a man of iron determination.

He listened with great attention to the reading in Arabic of the Coptic Church proclamation and the Italian translation which was given immediately afterwards. Abuna Abraham, who was present in the room and formerly held the Bishopric of Gondar, was elected Supreme Head of the Ethiopian Church and six bishops received episcopal sees in various parts of the country.

This unanimous acknowledgment by the leaders of the Coptic Church of the King-Emperor and the Head of the

Italian Government, and with it the pronouncement of final separation from and independence of all former related, and also hostile, powers, is of great significance; and marks the end of the fifteen-century-old subjection to the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

There was a speech and a reply. The Viceroy then stepped up to the aged, semi-blind Archbishop, gave him his hand, kissed the Coptic Cross, and embraced the Abuna. Salutes were again given for the King-Emperor and the Duce, and the assembly dispersed, slowly and silently, as it had gathered.

Next to the Italian flag on the roof of the Palace is that of the Viceroy. It has a blue field, edged with red, and in each corner there is a laurel wreath in gold. In the centre of the flag is a white cross and a crown on a red background.

The Roman she-wolf has been posted at the foot of the staircase, where two Somali Guards form a guard of honour.

Many pilgrims came here in the train of their priests. They gathered and camped round the churches, whose doors remained open. The Coptic clergy went in procession to their principal church, where the newly-chosen priests and bishops were ordained and consecrated. Guns fired a salute, and the natives held a feast of celebration.

When I took leave of members of the Government and the Press, most of whom were present, I hardly expected to meet them again so soon. But when I learnt of the first concert of the winter season, which was to be held in the newly furnished armoury of the Ghebi and was opening with one of Beethoven's sonatas, I felt I could not stay at home, no matter how tired I might be. Ladies of the Italian colony turned out in full force, and Church and Army were well represented. The room had been transformed into a real gala hall with the aid of hundreds of small flags and drapings. The shields giving the dates of the numerous victories during the Imperial war were left uncovered on the upper part of the walls.

While I listened to the music, my eyes travelled round. . . .

Adua, 5 October 1935,

Neghelli, 12-20 January 1936,

Tembien, 26 February to 3 March 1936,

Harar, 8 May 1936. . . .

And so it continued. Important dates of the whole campaign were recalled to the memory. Never before have I seen statistics so complete, nor did I realize how long the battles were drawn out and how laboriously, step by step, conquest of the country had to be carried out. Even with the capture of the capital, Addis Abeba, the flight of the Negus and the proclamation of the Empire, all was not done. Many places and territories still remained to be conquered and occupied, and the joy of victory had to march hand in hand with new, fresh fighting courage.

How many Italian ladies are now living in Addis Abeba with their husbands was revealed to me at to-day's tea-dance. It was an impressive gathering of smart society. Donna Ines Graziani had shown great skill and excellent taste in redecorating and furnishing the old, dilapidated apartments; everywhere one discovers vases, cosy corners with books and a homely atmosphere. There can be little doubt that the Duke of Aosta is grateful to her for this, particularly as he is at present living here without his wife.

I had not expected to find so much social activity in Addis Abeba, and that I was able to combine work and pleasure so frequently was a surprise. To-morrow 'my' military plane starts for Western Abyssinia—a strange, untouched world.

#### CONTRASTS IN WEST ABYSSINIA

##### *By air to the Sudan frontier.*

I rapidly grew accustomed to the wobbly gait of the small machine. I swung myself inside and, as soon as we were in the air, drew my chair to the open window-door, got ready my field-glasses and diary, and placed my overcoat over the knees. I offered my fellow-passengers—officers, private

soldiers and, on this occasion, two women Civil Servants—some German boiled sweets, which, apparently, met with high approval.

There is something uncommonly fascinating about these trips into unfamiliar parts ! This time there should be some experiences of a quite unique character. Taking the map I found Gimma, where I was to spend the first night, and traced the route farther to Gambela, Dembi Dollo, and Lekemti, all of which are linked by air. But I may decide occasionally to let the pilot go on alone, and choose the land route myself, so as to get to know that, too.

One of the women passengers told me that she had recently undergone in Addis Abeba an operation for appendicitis and that she was now returning to her duties in Gimma. She has lived there for two years, likes it very much, and has not yet become engaged. As we approached the town, she pointed out her house. Evidently she was delighted at the thought of getting home.

Although we only took an hour and a half to reach here, we were actually already in West Abyssinia, in the Province of Galla Sidama.

I was the first guest to occupy a room in the still-unfinished house which is being built to accommodate visitors of the Italian Governor. The hotel also has still to be completed. My first action was to hang a towel over the window ; there were no curtains. The garden was a mass of flowers. A deep well had been sunk, and was fenced round. I inspected numerous bamboo huts, the hospital and red-brick Governor's Palace, which are being put up in the vicinity of my lodgings.

The collection of samples from this Province, which was shown at the Tripoli Fair in February 1938, I was delighted to find, had been set out in a large room next door to the small editorial office of the *Bollettino di Gimma*. Everything in the way of native work and local produce was represented. Many varieties of timber from the splendid forests here were also on view.

Before another year has passed, this little town, whose

surroundings remind one of scenery in Umbria, will no longer be recognizable, and instead of the three thousand Italians living here now, a very much greater number and their families will have arrived.

Two dates show what swift progress has been made here. Gimma was occupied by the Italians in November 1936 ; on 13 October 1937 the Governor made his entry. Now many sawmills and brickyards are already working, streets and houses are reaching completion, and the former sixty thousand slaves of this place (Mohammedans) are earning their living as free men.

I should have liked to pay a brief visit to Kaffa, simply because the name pleases me and as it is the home of coffee. The capital, Bonga, could be reached in a day ; but, unfortunately, the new bridge is not quite finished. It would mean a delay of many hours, and my aeroplane was waiting to take me on the next stage of my journey.

At this height (5700 feet) one can still walk about without a sun helmet. In any case, I object to wearing one, as it presses on the forehead and ruins the hair. But in Gambela I should have to put up with it, unless I were prepared to risk sunstroke. Gambela lies 225 miles away, and so the journey would probably take us about an hour and a half.

Air travel spoils one. It offers so many fine spectacles and unusual things, which are missed if one travels by other means. As we flew on, we had magnificent views of mountain ranges, native villages, and luxuriant forests. . . .

Slowly we began to climb down. It grew oppressively hot. Below lay a muddy river. There was no sign of *tukuls*, but semi-nude native women stared up at us. At one time we saw an ostrich. I wondered what sort of place we were coming to.

Gambela struck me as being like nothing so much as a suburb of the infernal regions. I have the utmost admiration for the fifteen Italians who live in this abominably hot, unhealthy forty-five square kilometres of borderland. Besides wireless and gramophones they have no sources of entertainment. From time to time comes the news that a

native has been mauled by a lion only a small distance from the town ; there is no shortage of wild beasts of all descriptions. Hippopotami and crocodiles are 'plentiful in the nearby river, and poisonous reptiles are in their element.

What must it be like here in February and March, the hottest months of the year ? Already it is almost unbearably oppressive. It is not the heat itself which counts—to-day the thermometer shows a 'mere' 100 degrees—but the overwhelming humidity of the atmosphere. In the same climate, over in neighbouring Sudan, there are no Englishmen, but here fifteen Italians are bravely holding out.

Beyond them I also saw and spoke to several of the relatively small number of Englishmen living here, who are connected with the trading concession granted in 1902. During the four rainy summer months these Britons have their hands full, since it is only at this time of the year that the transport of pelts, hides, coffee, and so on is possible by water. This fact explains why several Englishmen, with their Sudanese soldiers, *must* also put up with this frightful climate. Naturally they submit to all Italian regulations, for, according to Article IV of the old Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement it is laid down that 'the concession may not be employed for either political or military purposes.'

No bullock, or dog or mule can live here longer than a fortnight. Tropical disease then carries it off. An Englishman told me with pride that he had a saddle horse which had been inoculated and was still alive. But the poor old animal could only leave his stable at an unearthly hour in the morning, and was in a wretched condition. Goats, cats, turkeys, and chickens are the only domestic creatures which are at all able to stand it.

The heathen, coal-black natives, whose number is estimated at a hundred and twenty thousand, belong to the Yambo tribe and come from the Sudan. They are tall and very powerful, and in the town they go about semi-nude, while outside it they wear no clothing whatsoever. They stared at me speechlessly. Some time ago, an English journalist came here with his wife ; in three months she

died of exhaustion. Formerly it was believed that the tall, sturdy Yambos, who seem always able to work, were immune from disease and strangers to malaria. It was said that they never got fever because they were descended from the crocodiles of the Nile. This belief has now been scientifically disproved by an Italian doctor, who came to Gambela, the first of his profession to do so, ten months ago. He found that the natives were subject to malaria, but owing to their remarkable powers of resistance they were able to go on working.

One needs to spend not an hour longer in Gambela than is necessary to obtain a picture of what is happening there ; it is the most dangerous place in the whole country.

Despite that, men from the neighbouring Dembi Dollo, now called Saio, a high-lying and delightfully situated place, are obliged sometimes for professional reasons to descend into this terrible low-lying part—which they leave again at the first available opportunity. To-day a representative of the Commissioner arrived in Gambela and asked me if I should like a lift in his car when he left in the afternoon. No offer could have been more welcome. My pilot had exhibited a little too much fondness for looping the loop, and had nearly disturbed my internal tranquillity—he had only wanted to show me what he could do ! “ See you in Dembi Dollo.”

\* \* \*

Motors and roads often have their disadvantages. We had a stiff climb before us, and on the sandy track the wheels frequently were unable to get a grip. We had to get out and push, and I regarded it as a lucky thing that my companion had brought one of his boys with him. After that we had to find water, for the radiator began to boil and steam in an alarming manner. But we managed somehow to keep going ; here in Africa nothing is impossible. The country presents difficulties of which we at home never dream, but man and machine struggle on in spite of them.

With the throttle open to its full extent we raced past a stretch of blazing grass, so close that the flames almost



touched us ; this year the natives have set fire to it too soon.

At dusk, after a three hours' drive, we arrived at Dembi Dollo somewhat the worse for wear. Once again, I was the first European woman to visit a place. No Italian wives have yet joined their husbands here, but several are now on their way, and houses are being got ready for them. It suits the Italians here admirably. It is a place of eternal spring ; the scenery is delightful ; the natives loyal and trustworthy. The soil is exceptionally fertile, the finest of vegetables and fruit often ripening twice a year. Neighbouring forests yield beautiful timbers of the noblest quality. It must be a joy to live here, in the heart of Africa, and yet enjoy all the advantages of the loveliest parts of Italy.

In November 1936 the Italians marched into Dembi Dollo. In less than a year they have built roads, houses, stores, etc., though, of course, there is an enormous amount of work still to be done. The Forestry Militia have now begun their activities. I should like to spend days accompanying them on their tours, and, in addition, write long descriptions of what I saw. Without such descriptions justice could not be done to this paradisaic zone in the Uolle territory, which is probably the richest of all in minerals.

I intend that my next stay in Africa shall be for a year, but by then I shall be so much at home that I shall never want to leave. I shall then go and join the Mission sisters in Humbi, in the neighbourhood of Saio, who returned after the Italian occupation to their old *Missione Consolata*.

\* \* \*

I then flew on to Lekemti. There is no other means of reaching this place, unless one is prepared to go by cart or lorry. We flew parallel to the river, which here winds about in the wildest manner.

We passed above the aerodrome of Jubdo. Close to here the German-Italian Minerological Society has an undertaking, which I should much have liked to visit.

The aerodrome of Lekemti is twelve and a half miles from the town itself. A motor lorry took us there, and it shook and jolted us to such an extent as I have never before imagined to be possible. But the country-side is very fine, reminding one of the Apennines, and the soil is very fertile.

The Governor, who arrived here several days ago from Gimma on one of his tours of inspection, flew back to-day. His province, Galla Sidama, covers an area larger than that of the whole of Italy. People are mostly inclined to lose sight of that, and in consequence do not fully appreciate the responsibility and wide range of duties which fall upon the Governor, especially as the latter is an independent ruler in his own territory.

This market town also offers fine possibilities to Europeans, and as soon as roads make communications easier, it will rapidly grow. At present it is almost impossible to reach it save by specially chartered aeroplane, and I can well understand that my Italian colleagues of the Press in Addis Abeba envied me on account of this little round trip of West Abyssinia. I am, indeed, glad that the opportunity was given me, for I have thus been enabled to take a glimpse into the unopened land of the future—the Empire's treasure-house.

#### WHO IS SUITED FOR AFRICA

For many weeks now I have been travelling in this land with 'open eyes,' and I have spoken to so many clever, far-sighted men of all professions and occupations, and of all ages, that I am in no doubt about the type of man who is suited for the life here. It may perhaps sound commonplace, but I nevertheless say it—only those who are of the Fascist disposition, that is only those who are young in spirit, free, enterprising, industrious, and sport and Nature loving, will feel satisfied here in the long run. Ethiopia cannot be built up without revolutionary drive, a good deal of determined 'push' and an active colonial mind. Bonds can only be burst by those who really possess strength and the courage and activity to make good their escape from them. Sedate office people, slaves of habit, apostles of

luxury, doubters and grouseers, pessimists and malcontents, should come supplied with return tickets ; they will need them. There are also people who have fear, especially of the furious speed at which life proceeds, and they imagine it to be their business to apply the brake, issue warnings, and preach against it. By crying wolf they discourage the dauntless ones. Let them do this within their four walls at home !

Just as everyone, no matter to what section of the community he may belong, what his occupation may be, or how old he may be, counts as being of Mussolini's generation, so can everyone, whose strength of youth, health and family circumstances allow, begin a new life here as colonist-pioneer and Fascist of the Empire.

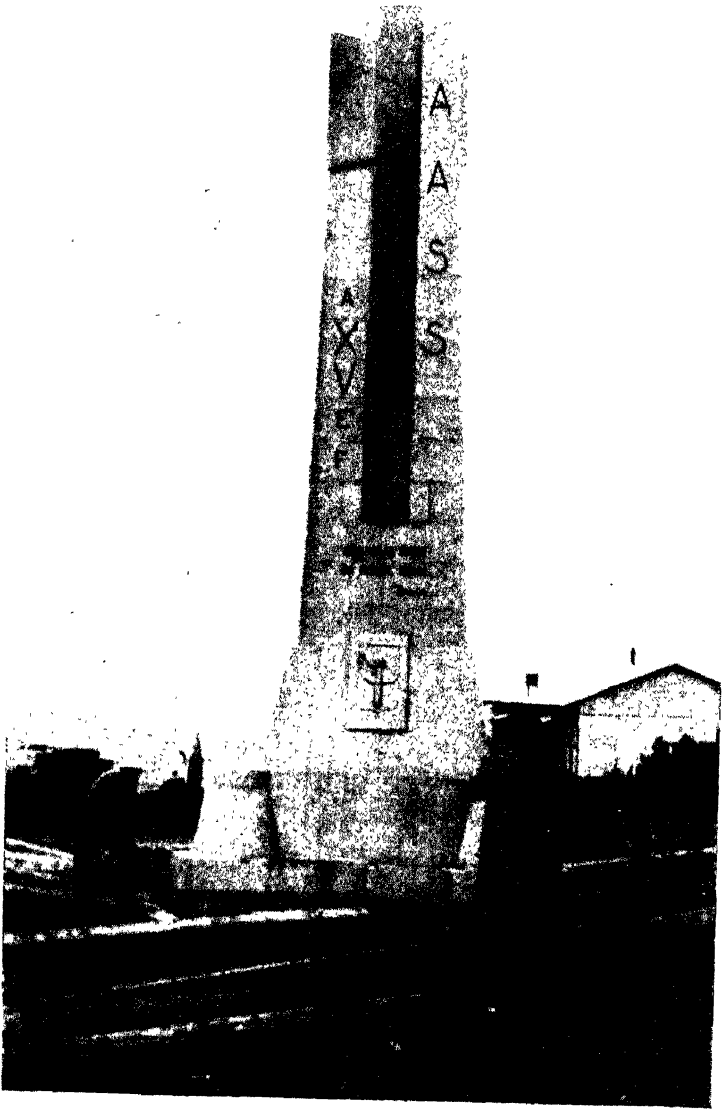
Naturally, sudden enthusiasm and an expectation of rapid success do not warrant a man packing his bags and leaving. Equally overmuch hesitation is also out of place. Also, even should the money factor be of importance, the consideration of what one is likely to earn should not have the last say in the matter—work with dignity ! Money in Africa is not gained more easily or more swiftly than elsewhere, for many counter-claims are set against it. And so he who for speculative considerations emigrates to Italian East Africa will in the course of time meet for a certainty with severe disappointments and setbacks.

People of harmonious and well-balanced natures, who day by day take pleasure in their work, who carefully mould plans for the future and at the same time do not lose sight of present needs, as well as those artistic people of strong character, those who know how to look after their own interests, and hermits—for people like these Africa is an El Dorado.

There is the chance, too, that unemployed, in so far as they are not to blame for being in that state, and the so-called 'ruined men,' who are morally integrate and lack bitterness, may be able to build up a new and successful existence here ; but a warning had better be issued against providing them with this new chance out of pity. Young



THIS SCENE FROM NEW ADDIS ABEBA PUTS ONE IN MIND OF A GERMAN  
SUBURBAN COLONY



THIS FASCIST MEMORIAL WAS RECENTLY ERECTED AT THE  
JUNCTION OF THREE ROADS NEAR DESSIE

It is inscribed with one of Mussolini's mottoes—'I have a Roman passion

ple, unassailed by worries, and engaged and married  
ples, possessing strong arms and, perhaps, small means,  
y should be encouraged to come in their thousands. The  
ne applies to all those who, although they have been  
ing in other countries, have stayed good Italians; of  
se there are ten millions. If they can leave, they will  
d in the new land a permanent home of the type they have  
ways desired.

Africa demands a good temper. That is an extremely  
important point of character. Without humour and good  
irits, the troops would not have held out as they did.  
nd so that no one may lose it, and all may be strengthened  
r it, they write and paint, on tents, vehicles and rocks,  
gans typical of the genuine Fascist spirit: 'Here I am  
nd here I stay. . . . Strong but yet stronger. . . . Who  
ares, wins. . . . If you have fear, don't rely on me. . . .  
our goal is farther on. . . . The machines say: The road  
long, but I swallow it,' and finally the familiar saying of  
ignor Mussolini: 'We always march straight on.'

But in Italian East Africa one cannot, and must not,  
pply the Fascist tone alone, for consideration must be  
aken of the native way of looking at things, and in certain  
irections the natives must be met. Naturally this should  
ot be done in a patronizing way, but in the human,  
ignified form which one would expect of Roman culture.  
The natives are not so dull that they are incapable of  
listinguishing between those who are their real masters  
nd others who are only masters of themselves. Old  
Abyssinian proverbs provide an insight into this people's  
way of thinking. We will compare some of them with  
Fascist sayings. 'Who girds himself while running will  
also lose his girdle while running. . . . What is spoken is  
forgotten, what is written is remembered. . . . A thieving  
Galla is better than a greedy woman. . . . A bad wife  
thinks more of her body than her husband. . . . The  
frightened man does not run from those of his kind. . . .  
Who teaches an old man writes on water, and who teaches  
a child writes on stone. . . .'

In brief, who is suited for Africa? The man who wants to stay a cultured, self-disciplined European and desires to become an active, easily satisfied African.

A RECORD FLIGHT FROM ADDIS ABEBA TO MOGADISCIO

*En route.*

"But why do you want to do this long flight from the capital of the Empire to the capital of Somaliland in one day? It's about twelve hundred miles. Civil and military machines invariably take two days over it. It is a journey which takes motor transport at least sixteen days. Furthermore, I can't let you have one of the new machines, which means that you will have to come down several times to refuel. So will you take two days over it?"

"I can't, even if I'd like to. I have spent nearly a week longer than I intended in Addis Abeba, and on top of that there was my trip to the Sudan; and I do so want to see Somaliland. That's only possible if the journey doesn't take me more than a day. Otherwise there will be no time left."

This conversation between the Viceroy and myself preceded my record flight to the sunny south. I should not care to repeat it.

We started from Addis Abeba at seven o'clock, in morning mist and cold.

To begin with, we flew at a height of 9200 feet. At eight-fifteen I noticed several small lakes in a rather lifeless tract of country. And about that time other objects appeared in view, but we were not close enough to them to enable me to say with certainty whether they were trees or ostriches.

More inland seas with uninhabited shores came along; there was not a person or a cow to be seen within miles. But in one of these lakes, whose right shores saw heavy fighting between the Italians and Ras Desta, there is reported to be a good number of hippopotami.

An ice-cold wind from below blew in upon us; my overcoat was quite inadequate protection against it.

Pink reflections of the rising sun began to appear between wisps of mist which still floated over the lakes.

Shortly before nine o'clock we came down at Guramba, took on board fresh supplies of petrol, delivered the military mail, and collected the local one. How the Italians here, cut off from the rest of the world as they are, delight in news from afar, and what a pleasure it is to them to see new faces occasionally ! But they had very little chance to see ours ; we were up and off again.

Mount Delo is in the region of 10,000 feet high. Round it was a sea of clouds, which themselves looked like a chain of snow-clad mountains. We climbed above them, and at that moment it was a matter of indifference to me whether the river below was the Sagan or the Galona ; whichever it was, I could not see it.

Again a small group of airmen were waiting for us at the Javello Aerodrome. This place is nothing more than an encampment of tents in the middle of the desert. The nearest native huts—there are four of them—are eleven miles away. People living here need to possess a good temper !

At eleven-thirty we left in the direction of Neghelli, and flew above an area which was recently the scene of an earthquake. That exactly matches my impression of this land. Its soil is hot and restless within, while the air above is as hot as an oven.

When we arrived at Neghelli at half-past twelve, the spaghetti was already waiting for us ; I guessed that our wireless operator had ordered it in advance. Before we had finished eating, the pilot gave the word to start again, and from that moment his watch was never out of his hand. I knew exactly what was on his mind : could we make it before sunset ? We could hardly stay the night at Lugh Ferrandi, our next and final stopping-place before Mogadiscio. Moreover, if we found ourselves half-way to Mogadiscio and were forced to turn back, we should find ourselves up against the same difficulties in landing, and the same dangers, as if we had gone on. In any case, it is



almost impossible to make a good landing when one is half-blinded by the setting sun.

However, we told ourselves that everything would be all right. We began to force on the pace, and our machine started to shake like a jelly-fish. Our route now took us above the Neghelli-Mogadiscio main road, which passes through a desolate, sandy plain. Above it, here in the air, the heat began to grow intolerable.

At half-past three, we landed for the first time in Somali-land, at Lugh Ferrandi. While the machine was being got ready for the final stage of our flight, I jumped into a car and went for a ten-minute sight-seeing drive. I just had time to remark upon the heat, the handsome Somali women and the open market-place, and notice that the *tukuls* here were of a different type of architecture. I observed with apprehension that the sun was sinking alarmingly low.

We took off once more, and the first thing that struck me was that visibility was getting poor. The principal pilot carefully examined his instruments and compared his discoveries with the information given by his map and watch. He was estimating our chances of a safe arrival. I kept silent. My mind was a blank; I looked at nothing, but merely grew aware that the mist was increasing. Presently I noticed that there was a number of small fires burning below, and I told myself that they were causing the fog; in Mogadiscio we should be sure to have good visibility for landing. I optimistically told myself that we would go to a cinema.

At five-forty we reached Afgoi. We could again distinguish the road and a river, and suddenly, on our right, we saw the sea. The Indian Ocean. There was Mogadiscio and the beach. My heart began to beat faster. Below, the streets were crowded with people, and everything was still lit by the sun.

I kept my eyes glued to the pilot, who began to circle the town. My watch then said five-forty-five. The sun was just about to dip beyond the horizon.

We came lower, houses and people grew bigger, and

details of the aerodrome could be more clearly distinguished. Members of the ground-staff made signals to us, and we prepared to land. At that moment the sun disappeared. We circled the aerodrome once more, almost touching the hangars, and soon our wheels were gently touching the ground. We had done it !

The pilot turned and looked at me, but we said nothing. He mopped his brow and heaved a sigh of relief. I went over and shook his hand ; he just nodded.

The General-Officer Commanding of the district was at the aerodrome. He saluted and helped me out of the machine. I did not feel very much like talking, or describing my trip, and he did not expect it.

Twenty minutes later I fell into bed. I was thoroughly tired out, and desired nothing so much as sleep.

#### IN MAGNIFICENT SOMALILAND

*Mogadiscio, in ' The Southern Cross.'*

I certainly never imagined this place was so beautiful. I have been completely captured by this snow-white colonial city, with its original buildings ; its palms perpetually waving in the breeze ; its stately cathedral ; its smiling sky ; its handsome, gaily-attired women. I can understand that Europeans who have lived any time in Somalia, and who know all the disagreeable aspects of the tropics and tropical life, still feel a longing to return here. I can also imagine that the partial sameness possesses a peculiar charm of its own. Blackshirts, who had been through the campaign, and marched northwards of Somalia, sang for my benefit some of the then-popular songs, which have a strange poetry of their own. Africa is a mighty magician. . . .

What marvels have been performed here in the last decade (in 1925 it was that Marshal de Bono came here), and, especially, during the last three years ! The European city is a ' Little Paris,' with smart hotels, cocktail bars, cafés, cinemas, and tennis clubs, which on cool evenings

are well patronized, not only for tennis, but also for refreshments and dancing in the terrace restaurants which adjoin them. Then there are restaurants by the sea, where one can obtain delicious fish and Chianti, and enjoy these to the tune of the waves. One can also see an Italian film in one of the open-air cinemas, and at the same time admire the Southern Cross *in natura*.

I took an evening stroll along the wide promenade, as one might do on the Riviera, and admired the picturesque coastline. In the harbour I could see the brightly-lit, all-white liner, *Leonardo da Vinci*, which was due to leave Mogadiscio on the following day. Tall palms nodded their royal crowns in the evening breeze.

Borne on this breeze were the distant sounds of the evening recital on the newly-opened organ in the cathedral. I walked in the direction of the sounds and entered the church, which was built three years ago. For this occasion the pillars had been decorated with red and gold festoons. All persons present were dressed from head to foot in white, which, in the case of the men especially, afforded a very unusual spectacle. A Bach fugue, German and austere, burst forth, and all—those within the cathedral and those walking by the sea, enjoying the wonders of the tropical night—could not fail to notice its clear Nordic accent.

On the hotel terrace at midnight we wound up a full day with a glass of iced Pellegrino lemonade. A fresh breeze blew; every table was occupied, and music roared forth from a loud-speaker. No one appeared to think of going to bed.

*10 December.*

The wife of the Italian hotel manager, who herself is a native of Crefeld, came up to my breakfast-table, accompanied by her inseparable companion, a small monkey, which was perched on her shoulder, and told me that the museum, opened in 1934, contained many things of considerable interest. I went along and saw specimens of old

and modern native work, models of ships, weird musical instruments, and thousands of highly-interesting samples of the produce of local agriculture. What would interest German visitors in particular were Klaus von Auderten's notes, dated 6 September 1885, relating to concessions granted to the German firm, *Africa-Orientale di Berlino* (Carlo Peters & Co.). To read this contract nowadays is a pleasure indeed, for the clock is not standing still.

The natives of Somaliland are tall and slim ; it is from this race that the Viceroy's Guard is recruited. In service they are easy to teach, and they are noted for their honesty. Evidently, there is nothing that a real Somali enjoys so much to-day as, on 'Native Day,' to spend hours strolling through the big stores and admiring the European goods. Their womenfolk do not accompany them. The women have a dignified bearing, high shoulders and good features. European men unanimously declare the Somali women to be the best-looking among all the races of Italian East Africa.

Several villages adjoining the European township of Mogadiscio are reserved for the natives. The majority of them work during the day in the European quarter, and the hotels, in which the chefs are Europeans, employ numerous native manservants. But employers have nothing to do with their board and lodging. Towards evening the native villages fill up, and the scene becomes a lively one. When one climbs the hill leading to the Viceroy's villa, an excellent view of these picturesque villages can be obtained.

The Viceroy's 'villa' is a very modern small mansion containing furniture made from local woods. Not far from the house, hidden by garden hedges, is a large swimming pool ; and, as one might expect, horse-rides and tennis-courts have not been forgotten.

'Fascist Mogadiscio,' as I call the newest streets and houses, shows a special 'novecento' style, in which Arab and Colonial styles of architecture are combined. The magnificent new Fascist Headquarters and our hotel are the best examples.

Up to the Abyssinian War, this 'Pearl of the South' led a quiet, sleepy existence, and not more than eight hundred Italians lived there. Now they cannot build fast enough, and there are many prospective purchasers for each house long before its roof is on. As the climate, despite the heat, is a very healthy one, and the place is extraordinarily free from malaria and tropical diseases, many officers and Civil Servants send for their families to join them.

Getting sufficient drinking water has caused a good deal of difficulty up to now, but this drawback has already been considerably lessened. On 28 October 1937 a new drinking-water distiller, which supplies 200,000 litres (approx. 43,750 gallons) daily, was put into service. A three-litre bottle costs twelve centesimi (about 3d.).

I went to see this great new waterworks, and then spent an hour on the nearby beach enjoying a rest and the sea air. After that I set off again to visit the 'Duke of Abruzzi's Village.'

As soon as you turn your back on the city, the fine picture is lost, and an endless sandy plain lies ahead. You see native villages, grazing camels and hump-backed oxen, but no European settlements. Despite that, the eye quickly reconciles itself to the change of scene. Here vast Nature has a different kind of beauty to that of the friendly city.

The fine, asphalt road is dead straight. We should reach our destination in three hours. Then, if we wanted to save time, we could return by the *Littorina*, which takes two hours and runs many times daily.

The 'Duke of Abruzzi's Village' admittedly contains a settlement, but this does not constitute the most important feature of the semi-State agricultural undertaking, which is known as the S.A.I.S. (Agricultural Society of Italian Somaliland). Here there is a great native village with 26,000 inhabitants, 4000 of whom work on the *Azienda*. They are supervised by a hundred and fifty Italians, many of whom live here with their families. All the time new stone houses are being built; church, cinema, and a hall for entertainments have been in existence for some

time. Since the death of the Duke, whose will and energy were responsible for creating this giant undertaking, his house has been occupied by the Managing-Director.

For hours we drove through this great estate of 62,500 acres. A large area has been given over to growing sugarcane and cotton, for which there is a huge demand in Somalia itself. The spirit which is gained from the sugar is so excellent in quality that it can be used in aircraft.

Many parts of this model estate are now lying quiet, because the cotton harvest was got in in November (it yielded 300 tons of raw cotton), and the sugar is not cut again until January.

‘The plants which you see here are only ten days old, but already they are six inches high. When we cut them nine months hence, that is in September, the sugar canes will be twelve feet high. Four hours after the sugar is cut, it has been through the factory, which at harvest time works day and night. Soon we shall be in a position to supply the seven or eight thousand tons which are needed completely to satisfy the requirements of Somaliland. Just consider that the great machines in our sugar refinery—there were no roads or railways here in those days—had to be carried here on camels. We had similar difficulties in every direction.’

The Company’s Manager, as he showed me round, afforded me a new glimpse of the determined work which is being done to-day in Italian East Africa.

“Where are your bananas grown?”

“We grew them at one time, but the transport of this quickly perishable fruit presented too many difficulties. Other things we grow are kapok, castor oil, earth-nuts, and various kinds of fruit, which do so well in this tropical climate. Naturally, we allow our natives a bit of land on which they can grow their own maize for themselves and their families. Beyond that, they receive a part of their wages in kind.”

Day was drawing to a close and still we had not finished our tour of this great estate with its twenty-eight miles of

track, along which the harvest is transported, its seven principal roads, its river and canals. Naturally, a concern of this magnitude possesses a great number of buildings and machines of all descriptions. My companions were particularly eager to show me German motors and tractors, the names of whose manufacturers they made me read aloud.

"To-morrow you must be sure to visit Vittorio d'Africa, to the south-west of Mogadiscio, which is the seat of administration of the great fertile area in which the State Research Institute for Agriculture at Genale is located," the manager advised me as we parted. But that was on the programme in any case. Somehow or other another day had to be spared for this visit.

Travelling by the sea road, we soon arrived at Genale, that great 57,500-acre estate in which more than a hundred settlements have been established. The oldest of them and the Research Station were founded in 1911, but progress was not made on any large scale until 1926. Most of the settlers brought good muscles and faith in the future, but very little in the way of wealth with them, and at the beginning they went through some hard years. Many of them were carried off by tropical disease, but that has now happily been stamped out. To-day, Fascist Italy is doing everything it can to compensate for the sacrifices of the past and to protect in the future this territory of such great importance to Somaliland as well as to the home country. It supplies principally bananas, cotton, rubber, and maize. The original tenants have meanwhile become the owners of the land they cultivate.

"Would you like to take a banana shoot back with you, and plant it at home?"

The man who asked me this was in the act of kneeling down in front of a box in which he was packing a sturdy shoot, about nine inches long, wrapped in local soil. He was sending it to Gondar. I wondered if it would be any good planting it after such a long journey.

"In ten months' time it will have grown up and will be

bearing its first fruit. An acre produces between eight and ten tons of fruit, and about five hundred bananas go to the hundredweight. This kind is small, but sweet and very aromatic."

As it was evident that everything I saw filled me with the greatest interest, I was asked to pay a visit to the small museum of the Research Station, in which many remarkable products of Nature and Science were exhibited.

In order to bring up a generation of natives for valuable work on the soil, as well as for social reasons, several hundred orphans are being educated in the *Colonia Agricola di Genale* under Italian supervision. They learn Italian and receive practical training designed to equip them for work later on large farms.

"Now that you have come so far, you must also see Merca, which is quite close at hand and where six banana ships and several mail-boats call every month. There are already two hundred Italians there, and hotels, restaurants, and cinemas, are open. To the natives Merca is still the Holy City. For that reason it contains numerous mosques and only a single Coptic church."

In Merca there is a delightfully fresh breeze, and streets and squares, market and city are of a considerable charm. Of course, it is now much quieter in the harbour than was the case a year ago, when five ships arrived practically every day, and very much quieter than November 1935 when the first Italian troops landed here.

I should never have expected to find in this small place an institution of such importance as the Serum Experimental Station, although I had already heard about it in Asmara.

"Before you go, let me quickly show you the skin of a giant python which attacked a camel, crushed and killed it. It was discovered near the river at Genale."

It was twenty feet long. I brought back a number of small snake-skins from Rio, and now they put this unique specimen in the car! But as it was considerably damaged, which substantially reduced its market value, I had no



compunctions in taking this handsome souvenir. It will make my young son open his eyes.

THE HISTORIC ROAD FROM ADDIS ABEBA TO DESSIE

*Mid-December.*

My impressions gained on this journey from Mogadiscio to Massaua imposed a severe tax upon an already-filling diary. But to cross from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea almost in a single 'hop' is not an everyday adventure, and many new impressions were bound to be gained.

The return flight from Mogadiscio to Addis Abeba, via Diredaaua, was not quite so exciting as the original one, but on the other hand I did not succeed in covering the journey in one day.

After that came a few days in the Capital, which I employed in saying 'good-bye' to the many friends I had made, Germans and Italians, who had shown me so much kindness and assisted me in so very many ways. Without their valuable aid I should not have succeeded in seeing much that I should have regretted missing. I was still unable to realize that the homeward journey was about to begin, that I was leaving Africa, leaving the country which I had been privileged to see in the early stages of its growth. Now I am about to travel the vastly important road from Addis Abeba to Asmara, whose acquaintance I have not yet made, since on the outward journey I travelled by way of Assab and Djibuti.

For the 'Viceregal Caravan'—that was what the printed notice on the wind-screen of my car said—I was indebted to the kindness of the Viceroy. That meant that, whatever happened, I should arrive at Massaua in time to catch my boat. If my car broke down, I simply jumped into the second one which followed empty. The third member of the column was a small lorry, which carried my luggage, and the rear was brought up by a car containing five *Carabinieri*, who constituted a sort of guard of honour.

In this formation we proceeded by way of Debra Brehan

in the direction of Dessie. This 125-mile stretch we could have covered in a day, but I wanted *en route* to inspect the Mussolini Tunnel at Termaber and several of the villages. A year ago it took one four days to go from Addis Abeba to Dessie by lorry. Private motors were impossible on the road in the state in which it then existed. It is still not quite finished, and a good deal of time is lost through it being necessary to make detours. In many places one still sees the board of the Puricelli Company of Milan, which is in charge of the road-building.

In comfort and in peace of mind we then drove along the stretch which Badoglio and his troops, in April and May 1936—of course, they were proceeding in the opposite direction—regarded as a ‘trip into the blue.’ The rain had washed away every sign of a path. Troops were forced to make roads of a sort to enable animals and vehicles to make progress. At that time long could not be spent over repairs, and motor vehicles which broke down could not be allowed to block the road and cause a hold-up; they were simply toppled over the nearest precipice, regardless of the fact that each would cost 100,000 lire to replace.

I had already heard about this, but I did not properly appreciate the difficulties which the soldiers faced until I saw the country for myself. In a spirit of comradeship, I saluted all drivers who had the Italian flag on the bonnets of their cars—a privilege granted only to those who took part in the entry into Addis Abeba.

At one point we were forced to wait while workmen dynamited some rock; the road was to follow a slightly different course, since the original road was found to have sunk during the rainy season. Perhaps an underground stream ran somewhere there. Trouble of this kind often occurs, and in many cases it is disposed of by the building of a small bridge. The road in any circumstances had to be made serviceable by June 1937, since it carries the bulk of the goods traffic to Addis Abeba, and there would otherwise have been a danger of a shortage of food.

An Abyssinian landscape! Natives carrying primitive

ploughs over the shoulder, and numerous herds grazing in the meadows. We were now at an altitude of 9900 feet, and although vegetation was growing sparse there still seemed something for the animals to pick up.

Presently we met columns of motor cars, and there was much sounding of the horn. When should we get to the end of them?

The little town of Debra Brehan (Debra=cloister, Brehan=light) is in future to be known as Debra Berhan; I am not aware though of the reason for this alteration. A hundred thousand natives inhabit the district and ten thousand live in the city, which lies on the River Beresa, a tributary of the Blue Nile. Here, in 1878, the great Emperor Menelik was crowned Emperor of Shoa. But the 'Coronation Church' is dilapidated and unlikely looking, and is in keeping with the *tukul* in which the King himself lived; its only claim to luxury was the reed mat covering the mud floor. On leaving the church, I was greeted by priests wearing the big Coptic Crosses, which, in accordance with local custom, I kissed. They had hurriedly spread out a carpet on the steps; it was probably the first time that they had seen a white woman in their midst. There are nine hundred Italians living here, but arrangements have not yet been made for their families to join them. For that it is still too early. The general who surrendered his bedroom to me for the night regards the local inhabitants (pure Amharas) as the best looking in the whole Empire, and he has high praise for the loyalty of his Askaris.

"In your estimation, how many soldiers will Ethiopia have in ten years' time?" I asked him. "Two millions for certain. Here, in addition to my battalion of Askaris, we have also a depot for recruits—you'll see them now baking their bread over open fires outside their tents." We went and watched them—I never dreamt the proceeding could be made so simple! They live here, by the way, without their families.

Although Ancober was only twelve miles away, I had no time to pay it a visit. There is no road, and it meant a

six-hour journey by mule. A Bavarian here, who runs a mill, a *spaccio* and a café-bar, and has grown fairly prosperous, had the surprise of his life to meet a German woman in this out-of-the-way place. He showed me his little place, on the walls of which were pictures of the Heads of the German and Italian Governments. He himself had never seen either man.

*Next morning.*

It was an extremely cold night. Palpitations kept me awake most of the time, for this place lies 9600 feet above sea level. For days and weeks I have been constantly changing climate and altitude, and that in the course of time gets on one's nerves. Mogadiscio to Massaua—it was a long journey, but somehow I should manage to stick it out.

Robbers and other unpleasant elements, sometimes in large bands, are said still to infest the less-frequented routes here ; this district in the time of the Negus, too, was always a source of disturbances. But they no longer dare to show themselves near the main road, and caravans can now proceed in safety. The local commander, when he came here eight months ago, took drastic measures to cure disrespect for law and order, and they have not been without their effect. Obviously, it would be very unwise for a woman to travel here alone, much less to dawdle on the way. If anyone is meditating such a course, she should reflect that here we are in the heart of Africa in the real sense. Despite that, no one, not even the Bavarian, who has lived here for years, could tell me of a single instance of rebellion, or could speak of any attack of which he himself or a friend had been the victim. If anyone rides to Ancober unaccompanied, he, as a matter of course, takes a revolver with him, I was told ; but no one has yet had occasion to use one.

Having taken leave of our kind hosts, we set out on the busy road which leads to Dessie. A staff officer accompanied us as far as Debra Sina. When he came here in

1936, he travelled in a column of seven hundred vehicles. In December of that year he counted in Debra Berhan 1350 lorries in a single day ; now the number of vehicles which pass through has sunk to four hundred a day. It is strange that there are so few accidents. In the previous year, only four lorries left the road, and only two of the drivers were fatally injured. The road at Termaber, to which we now came, is at an altitude of eleven thousand feet and was not completed until February 1937.

The journey was beginning to grow tiring, and so I gladly took advantage of a long pause to climb down into the valley, where the Mussolini Tunnel, which was begun in February 1936, has now been practically finished. It is six hundred yards long and twenty-five feet high. It is costing thirty million lire. The engineer in charge told me that the building had not caused unusual difficulties, and mentioned that most of their machinery was made by German firms. The old road travelled across the mountain slope and was so steep that soldiers had to haul their motors up with ropes. Now many miles will be spared, and a seven hundred feet climb, up and down, will no longer be necessary. A little while ago, Marshal Graziani walked right through the tunnel ; I did not feel quite so energetic. Instead, I was content with the fine mountain views, which I obtained by climbing on to a small knoll, and with picking a few yellow flowers which I found there.

A column of motors came towards us, but seldom have I seen a stranger freight than the one which they were transporting. Each of the lorries was filled with Gallas armed with spears, who were on their way back from a reconnaissance trip. They were bare from the waist upwards, their skin was dark brown and their hair black and curly. Their look . . . No, I certainly should not like to meet them alone. The men climbed down from the lorries and walked up and down ; an army chaplain gave them some Italian sweets, and they scrambled for these like children.

We pushed on again. Close to Dessie the road is twenty-



Alla Signora Louise Diel, in ricordo  
 cordiale della sua visita nell'Impero  
 Addis Abeba 5-12-37/X/11: R. Graziani

Ogaden, March/April, 1936.

To Frau Louise Diel in happy memory of her visit to the Empire.

Addis Abeba, 5 December 1937.

R. GRAZIANI.



11 gennaio 38 - XVI  
Alla Signora Luisa Diel  
in ricordo del suo viaggio  
nell'Europa -

Barbagli

two feet wide, and it describes great curves round the mountains; no road in the Dolomites could be finer. One forgot all about being tired, although the sun had long since gone down. The city, with its magnificent main street, which lay before us, was dimly illuminated.

Previous to 1935 there were five Italians in Dessie, the town where, for a part of the campaign, the Negus had his headquarters. Italian troops occupied it on 15 April 1936, and a few days later the Commander-in-Chief and his Staff made their entry. The city then rapidly developed into a highly-important base for reserves. To-day there are several thousand Italians here—among them a hundred families—and twice as many natives.

The Commissariat is housed in the Ghebi. Fascist Headquarters, a hospital, etc., have been newly built, and great modern provision-shops, such as I have seen in none of the other cities, have been in existence for a considerable time. Residential dwellings are only now being built on a big scale—the splendid situation of this fine city is sure to exert an attraction, though for some time it appears unlikely that the town will again be so busy as it was just after the war. At that time there were forty commercial vehicle concerns with branches in the city, and they were hardly able to cope with the demands made upon them. But in December 1937 the number sank to fourteen, and in early 1938 even fewer of them remained. This crisis was inevitable; it had to come. Dessie will not only recover from it, but in the course of time will progress and develop on normal lines. Frequently voiced opinions that this city is ideally situated as capital of Italian East Africa are devoid of any justification. At the same time, this city, situated on the three principal roads of North Abyssinia (these roads lead to Asmara in the north, Assab in the west, and Addis Abeba in the south), and, also, in the not-distant future, on the road that is to be taken to Gondar, promises its inhabitants a prosperous future, especially as the soil roundabout is particularly fertile.

The question now was whether I proposed waving



greetings to Lake Ascianghi and Macalle from the air, or whether I intended sticking to my original plan of continuing by road. It takes two whole days to drive from Dessie to Massaua by motor car, whereas the journey by air (312 miles) can be done in a few hours. The temptation naturally is very great—the decision must be taken to-night.

#### CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CONQUERORS OF ITALIAN EAST AFRICA

I have been looking through my diary, my principal daily task, for without a lot of trouble and work it would certainly not have given me the satisfaction, either with regard to its matter or its size, that I am now able to find in it. I have seen all the principal parts and places and all my information was supplied from the most reliable sources.

In Rome the Duce was most friendly and personally answered many of my questions; it was he who gave me my first general conception of the Empire. Signor Lessona, Minister of the Colonies, paved the way for my journey and provided me with every kind of assistance imaginable. In addition, Marshal Graziani, the Viceroy, the Governors, and the Generals all stood by me with advice and practical help, so that I was able to carry through the whole of my programme without a single serious hitch.

Every one of these men works from morn till night, and none of them has an arrogant or haughty bearing. I often think of what Signor Mussolini said at the opening of the Royal Academy in Rome some years ago. "The Italian Academy is not a showroom for celebrities whose fame is incontestable." That certainly applies to the leading men of the Empire.

No man could be more soldierly and modest, or better company, than Marshal Graziani. I was present when he was handed a high ecclesiastical order, and the crowd broke out into cheers. Graziani got up and acknowledged them, but from the expression on his face it was evident how much this applause embarrassed him. He has no desire to hear

speeches praising himself, or see his personality, which belongs to history, surrounded by hero-worship. I shall never forget the expression of challenging enthusiasm when

sotto la guida del Suo Grande  
 Duce ha saputo già realizzare  
 in questo immenso Impero -  
 W il Vostro nome ci è vicino;  
 ed il nostro a quello di tutta  
 la gente italiana e del suo  
 Grande Impero; augurandoci  
 vivere presto, in Africa il Vo-  
 stro lato al Sole -  
 Addio Italia 5.12.42 Graziani  
 XII

#### MARSHAL GRAZIANI'S DEDICATION

he said to me, at the close of an interview: "You will speak to the world and plainly tell them what Fascist Italy, under leadership of its Duce, has achieved in this vast Empire."

Great men! Usually one does not find it so easy to meet

them, but has to be content with reading about them in books and the Press. But on this journey I got to know them all in person—the men who conquered the Empire, and the Duce's colleagues, who during the war, and since, have done wonders and are slowly but surely mastering the great new tasks which confront them. If they were not in my diary, and had not each given me some written memento of his work, there would be the danger that I should confuse their names; but everything else has stamped itself indelibly in my memory. At first I found it rather novel, but quickly I became convinced of the completeness of the following fact: All Italians who in Italian East Africa occupy high posts took part in the campaign, after previously proving their worth in the old Italian colonies. It is therefore a matter of no surprise that one meets so many bold and experienced men, whose hearts are in the right place.

The Governor of Harar welcomed me to the 'Holy City of the Empire's Mussulmans,' and added, "The Province of Harar is happy to be able to send a hundred tons of coffee for the benefit of the Winter Relief Fund. The excellence of Harar produce may go towards confirming the brotherly sentiments which unite the Italy of Mussolini and the Germany of Hitler."

The General-Commanding in the Debra Berhan District exclaimed: "To whom will the future belong? To young nations like the Italian and the German. To us! Donna Louise Diel, when you return to Italy and your great German *Vaterland*, take the Duce and the Führer a living testimony of our sentiments and our faith. The future is ours."

The President of the National Association of Ex-Servicemen, who crossed over with me, summed up his thoughts and wishes in this way. "While the Ex-Servicemen's task, in exploiting the agricultural wealth of the Ethiopian Empire, is to create a new field of opportunity for the growing peasant community of Italy, it also desires to express the wish, through the writer, Frau Louise Diel, that untiring traveller in Empire territory, that the day may soon arrive

when Hitler's Germany will return to African soil and again take her place as a colonial Great Power.

"To that position her glorious past and secure and promising future justly entitle her."

The tone of these messages, which I read in my diary,

*Questa dedica-  
zione la si fa  
di quella spirito  
che con la spada  
e con l'aratro,  
conquista il nuovo  
Impero*

*Badoglio*

*Roma. 11 gennaio 38-XVI:*

#### MARSHAL BADOGLIO'S DEDICATION

is the same throughout. All, without exception, make reference to the justice of the colonial claims which the German Chancellor is continually putting forward. All of these men, who have given their utmost to secure for their country essential colonial possessions, entertain the strongest and friendliest ties with the new Germany. Now, as I

write this, it is clear to me for the first time that I am the medium of the messages between them and the German people. But after all, that is what I set out to be ; I went to the Empire for the purpose of taking my discoveries there back home with me. In farewell, the Italians call out to me : " Don't forget that it is your job to transmit the most cordial greetings and best wishes of all Italians in the Empire to the German people—it says so in your diary."

Pietro Badoglio, Duke of Addis Abeba and now President of the National Council for Exploration, was the last to turn over the leaves of my diary, and he read with keen interest the entries made by his compatriots. He then took a pen and wrote in a clear hand : ' This diary contains the synthesis of that spirit which, together with the sword and the plough, have conquered the new Empire.'

He then closed the book, looked at me with an expression of amusement, and said : " You see, it only took me five months and five days (for the victorious campaign), but it takes a woman nine months." It was my turn to laugh—and so from the start I got to know the human and humorous side of the great soldier. He took a piece of paper and drew a sketch of the road from Macalle, which wandered for fifty-two and a half miles through mountainous country. His men had to build it (it took them six weeks) in order that the seventeen hundred motor vehicles, into which the draught animals were loaded, could advance. After that he described the strenuous nature of this ' March of Iron Determination ' from Lake Ascianghi to Dessie. During those six days the only way he could bring up food for the twenty thousand men and eight thousand horses was by air. Although I had already read about it in Badoglio's book, the oral description was so vivid and full of character that I listened with rapt attention.

" One more question, Your Excellency. When did you know that the Negus had flown from Addis Abeba ? "

" On 4 May 1936 a native chief from Debra Berhan came to me and said : ' The Negus has been in Djibuti for the last two days. We're not used to that sort of thing ;

our Emperors either won, or died fighting in our midst. He has flown, has left his country and will never come back.' I gave him an assurance that he *certainly* would never return."

I for my part then drew a sketch of the route which I took through Italian East Africa. He looked at it carefully, took several puffs at his cigar, and then said, in a half-amused, half-rueful way: "Then you have seen more than I."

#### THE FLYING VOLCANO

Arithmetic is not my strong point, and for that reason I let others shoulder the mathematical problem of reckoning how many miles I covered in Italian East Africa. The answer given was 6250 miles, that is not counting the journey from Berlin to Rome and Massaua and back. How was that possible in a few months?

The answer to this was given to me by the Head of the Press Bureau in Addis Abeba, at the time when I was there. He had not counted the miles I had done up to then, but he could appreciate the rate at which I was travelling. And as Abyssinia happens to be a land of volcanoes, and as I often used an aeroplane as an auxiliary means of travel, they drew these two extremes together, put me between them, and dubbed me 'The Flying Volcano.'

Admittedly, I covered many hundred miles by air, a fact which I do not in the least regret, since only by this means can one gain a proper impression of the monumental massiveness of certain stretches of country. One can only really see them, and be master of them, if one is above them and flying over them. But where it was a case of inspecting work and studying phases of development, and when it was up to me to take time over seeing things, I had all engines, including my own, reduce their revolutions, and I went slow.

If I were to be asked to state objectively what form of travel I considered the most practical in Italian East Africa, I should answer that anyone who desired to travel properly, and obtain a complete picture of the country, cannot confine

himself to any one way, but must take the best means which are offered—and the accent lies on those last five words.

As is generally known, travel by rail at present is only possible between Djibuti and Addis Abeba, Massaua and Asmara, Asmara and Agordat, and Mogadiscio and the 'Duke of Abruzzi's Village.'

Next there are the Imperial roads. I believe that no colonial empire has ever possessed, twenty months after conquest of the country, a road system such as that which the Italians have created. Despite that, there are still many districts which cannot yet be reached by automobile, and the only possibility of getting to them is by mule or horse. On one occasion, in the Province of Galla Sidam, we descended on foot from the high plateau through a stony forest ravine, for the purpose of inspecting the saw-mills and timber-yards on the hill-side. I dreaded the return trip through this roadless tract of country, especially as it was terrifically hot. However, they provided us with sturdy, sure-footed mules carrying comfortable-looking saddles. When going up and down hill we had to grip tight and take care not to lose our balance. When the animals broke into a trot—then we really felt happy!

The decision what means of travel one will use every time in Italian East Africa certainly does not always depend on choice, even if the traveller is prepared to make great sacrifices in time and energy. For the present many of the big journeys are best done by air. The important routes are flown by the Italian *Ala Littoria* according to a fixed timetable.

The new motor buses, which ply regularly from Massaua to Asmara and Addis Abeba, and between Massaua and Gondar, are well-fitted out, but they demand strong powers of resistance on the part of Europeans.

What are conditions like where walking, cycling, and motor-cycling are concerned?

Many Italian officers in the colonies have a motor-cycle, since in straggling cities, like Addis Abeba, a personal conveyance is almost indispensable. Cycling is also very

popular. The natives do it for fun, and Italian workmen often find it the only practical means of getting from their homes to their place of work and back. There remains walking. For this Europeans require strong footwear. Often at the end of day, during which there had been much walking, I examined my shoes. At the heels the leather hung in strips, as though someone had hacked them with a harp knife. The sharp stones on roads in the course of building were to blame for the damage.

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For some while now it has been possible to fly from Rome to Asmara, in aircraft capable of maintaining 240 miles an hour, in sixteen hours. Soon a new air giant will smash this record and fly from Rome to Addis Abeba in twelve hours. One will then be able to breakfast on the Tiber and have dinner at the 'Mascotte' in Addis Abeba. But even at the risk of injuring my reputation as 'Flying Volcano,' I have no hesitation in declaring that I would only undertake such a rocket flight if circumstances forced me to. When I fly, I like to be heart and soul with the aeroplane ; and that is what I enjoy about it. But at three hundred miles an hour I am afraid I should find it impossible.

But this is hardly the way to wind up my diary !

Instead, I end it by sending greetings to Africa. Germany will march on.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE ECONOMIC SIDE

#### CAN ITALIAN EAST AFRICA BE SELF-SUPPORTING IN FOOD

**I**N earlier times thinly populated Abyssinia, whose native inhabitants are estimated at between seven and ten millions, could supply its own necessities of life without fully exploiting the fertile soil. Feeding was on an extremely modest scale, as was everything else in the life of this primitive mixed nation. But as they knew no better, and no one gave them practical instruction, it is probable that they only made use of about a hundredth part of the cultivable ground, instead of turning the whole of it to the service of the undernourished people. The great herds of cattle—it is estimated that there were ten to twenty millions in the country—suffered severely every year from disease. Besides that, the grazing lands were in a very poor state, and there was an insufficiency of water.

It goes without saying that the Italian Government, from Governor down to Vice-President, and, not least, the officially appointed Colonial Counsellors, are using every means they can find to 'stimulate the rhythm of production.' Agricultural credits are granted. In Addis Abeba a company has been formed to import suitable agricultural machines for colonists and natives. As wide areas in this Province are also being freshly cultivated, there are opportunities locally for the carrying out of practical demonstrations. Residents in country places let no chance slip by—when the natives on various special occasions gather round them in thousands—of giving demonstrations with, and practical instruction in the use of, modern threshing-machines and other new land implements. Further, seed is frequently

distributed free, and prizes are awarded to encourage good work.

It is calculated that approximately 125 million acres can be utilized for the growing of corn, of which there is still a shortage, and that in future it should be possible to harvest



Grand Hotel Florence-Rome

*L'Italia fascista, con  
la sua fede nel Duce e  
nel suo avvenire, aspet-  
ta dall'Impero la gran  
dezza e la gloria del  
l'Impero di Roma, di  
cui è la sola eredi-  
tiera.*

*Roma, gennaio 1938. XVI  
Per la Signora  
Luigia Diel  
Luigi De Bono*

#### MARSHAL DE BONO'S DEDICATION

a better average crop than 4.8 hundredweight per acre. Experimental fields which were sown in different parts of the country in 1937 gave far better results. The total grain harvest of 1937 proved satisfactory, though, unfortunately, it is not possible to give figures. It is expected that the 1938 grain harvest will amount to 30,000 tons, that is not counting

a substantial harvest of hard corn and taff. The whole Empire will, it is said, be transformed into a huge granary.

Live-stock will not be restricted to cattle, sheep, and goats, but will include also horses, camels, mules, and donkeys, all of which will be under proper veterinary protection. Swiss cattle and Sardinian horses are to be imported and crossed with the native breeds to improve the blood. Naturally the consumption of meat has greatly increased since the Italian occupation, and prices have risen. But as maximum prices have been fixed for all foodstuffs, including agricultural produce, there is no danger of profiteering.

A city like Addis Abeba requires daily two hundred bullocks and three hundred sheep and goats; that is roughly equivalent to the meat consumption in the bigger cities of Italy. It must also be borne in mind that the natives are now developing sensitive palates, and instead of, as in the old days, being content with anything, many of them now buy only the choice joints.

Italians have always been used at home to plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit, and up to now cargoes of these have been arriving regularly at Massaua from the home country. Naturally, that cannot, and must not, go on; and, moreover, the colonists, who as soldiers frequently had to be satisfied with dried fruit and tinned foods, are not going to allow themselves to get used to these more or less rare luxuries again.

In Italian East Africa the finest of fruits, such as peaches, almonds, apples, and strawberries, grow to perfection, though in the past the natives have simply not troubled to bestow the care upon them which they deserved. In lower-lying parts of the country oranges, lemons, bananas, papaws, dates, and so on, grow splendid crops. When road-building has further advanced, quick transport of these quickly perishable articles will be possible. Agricultural development in particular has been badly hampered by the lack of transport facilities.

The caravans have indeed been a strong ally of trade, and

by this means considerable quantities of grain, stone fruit, coffee, honey, eggs, butter, and animals have been brought to the markets ; but it will be readily understood that the choice of fruit, salad, and vegetables which reached the stalls in this way was not a very wide one.

In all Italian residential centres vegetable gardens have already been laid out, and in the labour camps and military centres, too, ample encouragement has been given in this direction. I remember the medical officer of an Askari regiment in Addis Abeba proudly showing me a well-kept vegetable garden, not far from the parade ground, which was under his personal care. Engineers of the Capron Works also grow their own vegetables. People and the soil have become more closely united. The ideal is that each household should be able to provide itself with fresh garden produce, which is doubly important since transport is very costly and often means a great waste of time.

Nevertheless, there are many districts that will have to be supplied by others which produce a surplus. When Western Abyssinia has been settled, it is capable of becoming the California of Italian East Africa. Fertile zones in the Province of Harar will also produce far more than they can consume. The following list of crops produced in Cercer in 1937 gives very satisfactory indications of what may be done in this direction in future.

Planted	Area cultivated	Crop harvested
Wheat . . .	6,250 acres	2,000 tons
Barley . . .	5,000 "	1,000 "
Maize . . .	11,250 "	5,000 "
Dura . . .	33,750 "	40,000 "
Oil Seeds (Castor)	uncultivated	10 "
Vegetables . .	1,250 acres	300 "
Coffee . . .	37,500 "	4,000 "
Lemons/Oranges .	25 "	15 "
Bananas . . .	250 "	200 "

One hopes also that everything possible will be done to increase native crops in the richly-blessed coastal areas of Somaliland.

Apart from potatoes, vegetables, and fruit, which foodstuffs, of which there is still a shortage in Italian East Africa, are being imported?

As indicated, in Italy the majority of applications for export permits for Italian East Africa are made by provision firms, and no less than 370 of these applications (among a total of 980, which includes all types of commodities) have been successful. If we are told where these firms exist, we can then guess which classes of foodstuffs are being exported. Sixty firms are established in Sicily, forty-five in Emilia, thirty-five in Piedmont, and a further thirty-five in Lombardy and elsewhere. Statistics show that, in the first nine months of 1937, nearly 100,000 tons of various grades of flour, 9000 tons of other ingredients used in baking, 7000 tons of rice, 6600 tons of sugar, meat to the value of 10 million lire, oranges and lemons to the value of 8 million lire, as well as legumes, etc., and, of course, all kinds of beverages (among others, 3,366,000 gallons of beer) and tobacco to the value of 42 million lire were imported by Italian East Africa. There is nothing very surprising or suspicious about that, especially as the Motherland, for her part, is a large importer of colonial produce. Quite apart from that, the aim to make Italian East Africa as quickly as possible self-supporting in food is being steadily pursued.

When fertile Abyssinia has been cultivated with industry and prudence, and the natives under Italian supervision perform good work, and when poultry-keeping, bee-culture and fishing have received deserved attention, then the Italian colonial empire will be able successfully to achieve its ambition of being self-sufficient in food. The country should also be able to satisfy its own needs in respect of cooking salt, that is as soon as transport conditions have been satisfactorily regulated.

The most important presupposition naturally is, and remains, that there must be everywhere a sufficiency of water for man, beast, and the soil. We know that in all parts of the land practical endeavours are being made and

that the goal will be reached long before the end of the Six-Year Plan.

#### ITALIAN EAST AFRICA'S LEADING EXPORTS

Here no attempt is to be made to name them all and, with statistical accuracy, give a catalogue of prices and quantities. Elsewhere the importance of many raw materials, such as cotton and coffee, skins, hides and meat, bananas and other agricultural items, has already been pointed out, and, not least, the place of importance in the export trade taken by minerals—valuable metals, precious stones, copper, iron, coal, etc.—has been mentioned. The Motherland will take all those products which she herself lacks and for which she has previously had to find foreign exchange in order to import them from other States. The leading articles of this type are wool, cotton, cattle and meat, coffee, rubber, etc., though oil-seeds, linseed oil, animal fats and timber, among other things, are also of importance.

However, it is not the wish of the Italian Government that luxury articles, as, for instance, certain pelts and skins and the best grades of Harar coffee, should only find their way into Italy. Experience has shown that these goods have previously accounted for 40 per cent of the total exports of Italian East Africa. In 1937, from Eritrea alone, 347 cwts. of goat-skins, to the value of a million lire, were exported to the United States. In other countries there are buyers well supplied with ready cash, and these things are to be sold to them in order that the Italian trade balance may benefit by the sales. For this reason import embargos and quotas are placed upon many of Italy's own colonial products. From time to time these are subject to amendment, but they are still maintained.

In June 1937 the first cargo of Ethiopian cotton, consisting of 100 tons, was discharged at Genoa, and altogether 5000 tons of coffee were imported in 1937 from Italian East Africa by the Italian Coffee Im-

portation Company. But, with certain exceptions, the Customs authorities in Italian East Africa have been instructed to prevent the free export of coffee (and pelts) to Italy. Further, the regulations governing the issue of export permits for abroad in return for an undertaking to surrender the foreign exchange acquired by the sales remain in force for the present.

Her colonies place Italy in the position of being able to export to the countries of Central Asia and the Far East and to supply African markets ; moreover, on advantageous terms, since the goods will not be burdened by the high dues which would otherwise be incurred if it were necessary to transport them through the Suez Canal. As all articles of export in Italian East Africa, as well as in Italy itself, are subject to a rigid control where quality and price are concerned, it follows that only goods which represent high value for money will find their way abroad, and that these will amply advertise themselves and bring along new customers. The wish and the need to hold and extend the foreign markets may often prove difficult in view of Italy's own urgent requirements in this or that product, and it is evident that at various times the regulations will have to be amended in accordance with the foreign-political and economic situations.

With regard to Germany, the exchange of goods with Italian East Africa during 1937 was highly satisfactory to us. We imported from Italian East Africa agricultural produce (fruit, raw tobacco, coffee, etc.) costing 328,000 marks, while on the other hand our exports to Italian East Africa reached a value of 5,458,000 marks. They were made up of coal, motor spirit, lubricating oils, machinery, motor vehicles, and other things.

Till now exports of raw produce from Eritrea, by land and sea, amounted to between 60 and 70 million lire annually. It is expected that the favourable situation of this province from the point of view of communications will be progressively turned to account and that Somaliland will also send its chief items of export—salt, incense, hides,

butter, etc.—as far as the Far East. The banana boats of the 'Ramb,' a State-owned concern which trades in bananas, now call at the harbours of Brava and Merca in Somaliland. The first balance sheet, published in January 1933 showed a net profit of 7 million lire. The rich fishing grounds off the Somaliland coast permit one to forecast the establishment of a local canning industry that will still further increase the import and export trade of Merca, which has risen in the last two years to ten times its former extent.

Numerous Italian-Ethiopian industrial firms, with head offices in Milan, Rome, Bergamo, Addis Abeba, and other cities, were founded in 1937. As chairmen of these companies well-known figures in public life were appointed as a guarantee that they will also work in national interests. First, the Ethiopian Cotton Company, with a capital of 2 million lire (it can be increased to 20 millions) must be mentioned; this concern has as its chairman Professor Olivetti, an Italian Deputy. Then come the firm whose interests are in fibre plants—it has a capital of a million lire and is under the chairmanship of His Excellency, Signor di Manchi—and the company which handles oil-seeds. All operate within the framework of the State programme of autarky.

Formerly Ethiopian export trade was in the hands of Arabs, Syrians, Indians, and Greeks. Now, of course, the Italians have taken it over and are directing and extending it in accordance with national points of view. For to-day, more than ever in the past, the strength of a Great Power rests upon the solidity of its economic foundation.

Italy, where the lack of raw materials is keenly felt, must, therefore, employ and direct the production and disposal of Ethiopian produce with consideration for many different viewpoints. As a country lacking in gold it will naturally also continue to encourage gold-mining by every possible means. For some years now Eritrea has occupied sixth position among the African gold producers.

After the establishment of the Empire, the semi-State



'Amao' Company was founded, which is methodically directing the mining of valuable metals in Eritrea and furnishing the old mines with new equipment. Its success may be seen in the published results, which show increases from month to month. In January 1937 over 5920 kilogrammes of gold were deposited with the Bank of Italy; in June, the quantity was 37,566 kilogrammes, and in October as much as 81,611 kilogrammes of gold.

Besides this mining company, other big undertakings, some of them with 49 per cent German capital, were founded, and, like the 'Sapie' (for mineral research in the Uollega territory in an area of 36,000 square kilometres), the 'Smit' and 'Comina' concerns, run with the assistance of experienced German engineers. Others have received official recognition, and what others remained have been re-organized and re-equipped. Numerous scientific research groups are at work in Italian East Africa to determine where petroleum, copper, iron, etc., may be economically gained. It is calculated that three years will elapse before complete results can be made available; but already maps have been sketched which point where the most valuable areas for lignite, petroleum, crystal quartz, gold and mica are likely to be. Engineers have recently discovered important deposits of diamonds and gold near Gimma, which give promise of being one of the richest and most workable mining propositions in Abyssinia. This may serve as an example of the fact that expectations for the future are entitled to remain highly optimistic.

At the present stage the value, during the first nine months of 1937, of East African produce (raw hides, bananas, cotton, coffee) imported by Italy was only 169 million lire, that is merely 1.6 per cent of the total of Italy's exports. Against that exports from Italy to Italian East Africa at the end of 1937, which consisted in the main of manufactured articles, such as motor vehicles, cotton and woollen goods, amounted to the substantial figure of 1668 million lire, that is ten times the extent of the imports and 26 per cent of the whole of Italy's exports.

But when the Empire's roads have been completed, uses have been built and shops are adequately supplied with goods, in brief, when the process of normalization has been further developed and, in addition, when exploitation of the soil and trade in Italian East Africa have made faster progress, then the home country will be able to reap her reward for the great sacrifices which for years have been made on behalf of her colonies.

#### THE CONSUMPTION CAPACITY OF THE ABYSSINIAN MARKET

It is known that the French colonies take 54 per cent of France's exports and that the Motherland, for her part, takes 48 per cent of the exports of her foreign possessions. What ratio can be expected in the case of Italian East Africa?

Immediately war ended, and when the new Italian colonies were open, Italian exporters and importers and retailers already established in Abyssinia hoped and believed that business would rapidly boom. All of them hastened to be there in time to gain a share of the spoil. Naturally only firms which were in possession of a new, valid licence were permitted to trade, and others, which were notorious for their anti-Italian sympathies, had to go out of business.

Many old-established and well-known Italian houses (for instance Zingone) opened, in 1936, large branches and depots in Addis Abeba, and smaller ones in the less important places, and filled them to the roof with goods. A commission appointed by the Imperial Association of Merchants planned to erect, after the pattern of bazaars, a series of big stores, in which all important articles of everyday use would be on sale, and to establish large depots at different points from which to replenish stocks.

Business houses which had enjoyed greater experience in colonial conditions in East Africa held back for the present and very properly told themselves that the natives were not in a financial position to step up as valuable customers and that, should they acquire money, they would hoard

their silver coins and attempt to barter for the things they fancied—these would hardly exceed rugs, yarn, hardware, bags, and sweetmeats. The Abyssinian's needs are very modest ; he has no use for shoes or stockings, European clothes or furniture, curtains or carpets, and there is very little which he requires in his mud hut. On the other hand, Italians who emigrate to East Africa bring what they need with them—and that consists of essential, practical objects of everyday use.

The world of business had a shock and soon began to get anxious about the large sums which it had invested in goods, transport, and incidental expenses. Where good, useful articles are concerned, these can always be disposed of in the course of time, but as, month by month, transport costs decrease, rival concerns are able to deliver more cheaply, unless their more unfortunately placed competitors are prepared to forgo their profits. Large fortunes which have been slowly amassed can then rapidly dwindle. Firms which rightly judged local requirements, and could satisfy them at low prices, were able to reach a turnover far beyond anything that could have been expected in the home country.

A severe defeat was experienced also by those firms which believed that they could dispose of cheap rubbish to the natives ; that the latter knew no better, and that Italians would have to take what they could get. The Italian authorities and the Fascist Merchant Federation kept a watchful eye on them, controlled goods and prices, and generally went to work in accordance with the strict principles which regulate the home markets. In the spring, 1937, exhibitions were held in Addis Abeba, Diredaui, and Harar, at which there were some excellent displays of cotton goods, clothing, articles of furniture, and machinery. These exhibitions served the two purposes of practical enlightenment and advertisement.

Importing in Italian East Africa is a question directly affected by tariff regulations and currency laws which apply in the Motherland. Eritrea grants preferential treatment to

Alla Signora Diehl

Cordiale  
Roma, gennaio 1938 - XVI

Emilio De Bono



To Frau Louise Diehl with cordial greetings.  
Rome, January 1938.

EMILIO DE BONO



LOUISE DIEL

all goods which come from Italy. Djibuti enjoys no preferential tariff, but imposes a 10 per cent duty on all goods in transit. In the case of Somaliland new customs regulations are being drawn up. The Colonial Advisory Committee desires, as soon as international conditions permit, to fix a uniform tariff for all goods imported into Italian East Africa, and that all products from the Motherland should have preference.

As the capacity of the world market to take Italian industrial products no longer approaches the quantities on offer, the Empire—exactly as in the case of the British and French Empires—must step forward as the big customer. Japanese cotton and foreign artificial silks are disappearing from the Abyssinian markets and are making room for Italian goods. Italian East Africa imports from abroad only those goods which the Mother Country cannot produce at a reasonable price and, of course, all articles which she is not in a position to supply.

According to that point of view nothing can be said against the importation of locomotives, agricultural machinery, condensers, and mineral oils from Germany. But whether, as of old, England will be permitted to continue consigning cigarettes and whisky, France, wine and oil, and Greece, cheese and wine, is another matter. The 'Central Advisory Commission,' which dictates in economic matters in Ethiopia, will not hesitate to give its opinion.

Local sources of supply in the Empire are to be utilized to the greatest possible degree—this applies principally to foodstuffs. The importation of provisions must gradually decrease, since the cost of conveying them and the Suez Canal dues, which have to be paid in foreign currency, impose too great a burden. For the same reasons the importing of motor vehicles, automobile tyres, cement, beer, and so on is subject to restrictions; it is possible only to satisfy essential requirements.

A glance at the import lists of other colonial States tells us that all, save those which have their own industrial organizations, import motor-cars, machinery, sacks, soap

glass, cutlery and hardware, and beverages, etc. Also Italian East Africa will continue to have need of these things, not forgetting textile goods, superior leather goods, and articles of luxury. The quicker Italian colonists attain a certain degree of prosperity, the sooner will a bigger sale be possible for those Italian firms in the Empire which import not only objects of everyday use, but also costly articles. In the next few years shop windows in Addis Abeba will undoubtedly have an appearance which tells of the type of buyer which has sprung up in the meanwhile. When the lire are more plentiful, and there is something left over in many pockets, turnovers will increase and profits grow.

#### IS ABYSSINIA A RICH COUNTRY ?

With many countries, whose statistics do not tell us very much, it is the same as with people whose circumstances are not easily estimated : one judges them to be rich and is convinced that certain large sources of income are at their disposal somewhere. Since, in the Negus' time, the amount of gold, platinum, and precious stones found was not published ; since the country's timber wealth was not guarded, but more squandered than increased, and as cattle and agriculture were never properly protected or directed, and remained backward, it is by no means an easy task to assess the country's wealth as a whole.

The statement that Abyssinia is the African treasure-house is as ancient as the Biblical reports of Solomon's Temple and the Land of Ophir. Experts, whom the Negus summoned, were said to have discovered, besides gold and platinum, also radium, silver, iron ore, copper, and oil. The Italo-German research groups, as we know, are rather more reserved in their judgment, and so far all that has been published is that the Jobdo Mine deposited a hundredweight of 24-carat gold and fifteen kilogrammes of platinum with the Bank of Italy in March 1937. We hear that economically workable deposits of asbestos near Diredaua and brown coal in the Omo Valley have been discovered ; petroleum is

thought to exist in the Southern Danakil territory, and in Harar, and coal is expected to be found near Gondar. We hear further that peat has been found in Eritrea and near Gondar, and that experimental work is being carried out ; that peat to a depth of 20 to 25 yards, as well as iron minerals of good quality, has been explored, and that sulphur and salt exist in huge quantities in the east ; that all rivers in the Uollega territory carry gold, and that copper and lead are no rare discoveries in Western Abyssinia. In brief, hopes and probability reveal that deposits of ore and minerals of all descriptions may be found and successfully mined, but it is still too early for definite information to be available.

Timber wealth in Abyssinia now only exists in those areas which the Amharas did not strip and in the virgin forests of Western Abyssinia. Workmen engaged in the building trade are continually coming across enormous roots of long-since felled forest giants. Nevertheless, there are, in the thick tropical forests, splendid specimens of trees of a kind hitherto unknown to the Italians and for which no Italian names have yet been found. Many of these valuable timbers are heavy and massive like mahogany, while others are so light and easy to work as to be suitable in part for aircraft construction. When it is considered that timber in the past has had to be imported from the Sudan, Sweden, and elsewhere, costing on the average the high price of 1800 lire a cubic metre, it is satisfactory to reflect that fine stocks, which are being added to, exist in the timber yards and sawmills which the Italian *Missione Consolata* established years ago in rich forest areas. There are also six sawmills at Addis Alam, near the capital, which handle ten different kinds of timber. The Forestry Militia is now in charge of afforestation work, and its duties at first will consist of protecting the forests (there is a law prohibiting felling trees and the clearing of woodland in certain districts by fire) and of limiting the rational utilization of standing timber ; but later—namely in the last stage of the Six-Year Plan—further progress in afforestation is to be made. However,



at the present time, first steps in afforestation are being taken in the neighbourhood of Addis Abeba and in the proximity of Termaber. And the German-Italian firm of Saille-Bohnenberger, whose old timber concessions have been confirmed, has already begun felling in the forests of Baghero-Metcia and Ghirfitta (in the Addis Abeba area).

As the capital, Addis Abeba, happens to lie in a forest of eucalyptus trees, which attain a height of 125 feet, it knows no shortage of simple building timber and firewood. But care has to be taken to see that new trees are planted during the month of February. They are now considering obtaining tar products from wood for local requirements.

The problem of fuel remained acute in the Empire until it was ascertained whether, and in what quantities, solid, fluid, and gas-producing fuels existed on the spot. In many places water power is employed to create electricity for the factories, for irrigation purposes and as a means of transport. The 'National Company for Electrical Undertakings' works hand in hand with the Fascist Association of the Electrical Industry. When their explorations have been completed, they will erect dams and build electricity works and sewage systems. Waterways and waterfalls are sufficiently numerous to enable great headway to be made with hydro-electrical schemes. As soon as preliminary work has been concluded, the building of further power-stations on rivers and lakes will be started. In many towns all new houses are already being equipped with electric cookers and refrigerators; on the other hand gas is nowhere used either for heating or lighting.

To the question whether Abyssinia be a rich land, the only reply one can give, as I have tried to show, is that they are entitled to expect it and, accordingly, are making the greatest exertions to develop it into a productive, rich colonial country.

#### TRANSPORT AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The bulk of the imports have, since 1937, found their way into the Empire *via* Massaua, and only very little in the way

of goods—and that only with special permission obtained, from the Ministry of Italian Africa—is carried from Djibuti by rail, which formerly handled 72 to 75 per cent of the whole of Ethiopian trade. (In 1934, 59,791 tons of goods, consisting of 27,477 tons of Ethiopian exports and 32,314 tons of Ethiopian imports, passed through Djibuti.) Food-stuffs must be carried exclusively in ships of the Lloyd Triestino Line and must be discharged at ports in Italian East Africa.

However, the Port of Assab handles principally building materials for the road to Sardo and for the extension of its own harbour system ; yet in a few years time this important port will become the mainstay of Massaua and, consequently, of Italian East Africa.

The 'Technical-Corporative Council,' appointed by the Italian Government, goes into the question of transport with consideration for all points of view and, especially, that of the distribution of goods. It also takes care that the old caravan tracks remain in good repair, in order that the remotest districts are able to be supplied with the things they need. It is also doing all it can to get the cost of transport reduced. If we reflect that in August 1937 the cost of carrying one kilogramme of goods, of no matter what type, was between five and six lire for the journey from Massaua to Addis Abeba and that four months later it had sunk to one and a half lire, we shall have some appreciation of the important role which freight costs play in the price of goods.

In the autumn, 1937, the Italian-Ethiopian Road Transport Co., '*Citao*,' promoted by the State, began to operate, and for the present its activities will be confined to carrying passengers, though later it will gradually be converted to convey goods. The '*Citao*' has established car-parks, spare-parts' depots and repair shops in all the principal places along its route. This undertaking in no wise constitutes a dangerous competitor of the semi-State and private companies which, between them, total four hundred firms and own from fourteen to fifteen thousand motor vehicles. Transport firms, like Gondrand and '*Saima*,' which maintain

several hundred lorries of foreign and Italian manufacture, have branches in all important places in Italian East Africa, which they will continue to hold.

The demand has substantially decreased, and as the normalization process continues it will still further decline. As running costs (wages, fuel, tyres) are extremely high, there remains only a small margin for profit. In Italy tyres last for twelve to twenty thousand miles, but in East Africa they have to be changed every twenty-five hundred miles. Moreover, driver's wages—the men perform hard, perilous work, and generally have to sleep in their lorries—are on a scale considerably higher than that in existence in the Mother Country.

In speaking of transport, one goes on the assumption that there are usable roads. Now, even during the summer rainy season, these are in good condition, which, when they recall former conditions, may seem incredible to many people, especially as, during this time, native trading stops completely. The Press and Propaganda Bureau in Italian East Africa provides the following enlightening statistics.

From Asmara to Addis Abeba 3461 motor vehicles made the journey in August and 3271 in September—a total of 6732 vehicles. About the same number travelled in the reverse direction.

In those two months 1422 motor vehicles went from Diredaua to Addis Abeba, and approximately the same number made the journey in the reverse direction.

The figures prove that although traffic as a whole was limited during the rainy season, it was by no means interrupted.

Elsewhere I have referred in detail to the fact that by June 1938 95 per cent of the roads under construction would be open to traffic, and I mention it once more because of its tremendous importance to transport circles and on account of the further reduction in costs which it will bring about. Until April 1937 the cost of transport by road from Addis Abeba to Massaua was 247 lire per hundred-weight; according to the new tariff of 15 April it was

reduced to 110 lire ; in February 1938 it was as low as 50-65 lire, and from 30 June 1938 it was to be brought down to 30 lire per hundredweight. Thus, within nine months, the cost of transport declined from 247 lire to 30 lire. The example cannot be taken as applying generally, but it serves as a basis of calculation and indicates the scale.

Regardless of the modern transport services on the new roads, the natives still use camels to carry their small consignments of goods, and, naturally, the Italian Government does nothing to discourage them. They pack their goods in home-made fibre bags of various kinds, and as the pack-animals maintain a quiet and steady pace the freight does not get shaken about, and it suffers little in transit. It is a far more difficult matter getting imports from Europe, provisions especially, to their destinations undamaged. In many cases packing was faulty, and many goods suffered damage, the result being that, in the autumn, 1937, new regulations were adopted, with which shippers were obliged to conform. It has been found that cases weighing between 100 and 120 pounds are the most conveniently loaded, and in consequence preference is given to these.

We are aware of the difficulties that have been encountered in sending Somali bananas, most of which are exported to Italy, so that they reach the markets in perfect condition. (In the trading year 1936-7 bananas to the value of more than 50 million lire were sold in Italy and abroad.) It was not until ten years ago that sea transport began. At that time the Italian Government floated a special company, the 'Ramb' (*Regia Azienda Monopolio Banane*), that, until the autumn of 1937, had seven fast steamers in service, which passengers, too, frequently used.

Just as good roads are essential to punctual transport services, so the industrialization of the country is dependent upon the ability to get regular supplies of material delivered everywhere. If there were difficulties in the way of transport, cement, brick, and glass factories, and all the others, which are urgently needed, could not possibly carry on

satisfactorily. The success of one depends upon the success of the other, and the two things must go together.

The natives in the past carried on a wholesale and retail trade, but they undertook no work of an industrial character; now the Italian Government is making great efforts to introduce essential industrialization in Italian East Africa. The Italian Press reports with satisfaction that by the middle of February 1938 500 million lire had been invested in industrial undertakings in East Africa. At present all Italian industrial machinery which is imported into the colonies is free of duty. It is hoped that the new, modernly-equipped cement factories in Massaua, Diredaoua, and at Hambo near Addis Abeba, will be in a position to supply the needs of the whole territory.

All Provinces publish regularly reports of 'industrial activity' in their respective areas. Under this heading is understood also the breeding of valuable wool sheep, the culture of oil plants and the Ghinda plant (which is used in the manufacture of cellulose), the encouragement of coffee-growing, etc. Independent of those activities, numerous, at present still small, industrial undertakings are constantly being founded. By summer 1937 only a few industries (there were two tanneries, five chemical works, a factory in Asmara which manufactured confectionery, sixteen sawmills, etc.) were at work. But the eight hundred authorized industrial concerns, whose head offices were in Italy, were able to develop their activities on a big scale. Among them were over four hundred building and road-building firms, eighty firms belonging to the mechanical industry, ten tanneries, thirty-eight chemical works, eight factories for the manufacture of clothing and furniture, thirty-two sawmills and wood-working factories, eighteen flour-mills and factories which manufactured baking ingredients, etc. Naturally, these concerns stand in close alliance with the numerous credit institutions and banks and many of the total of one thousand trading companies. A glance at the statistics kept by a manager of one of the branches of the Bank of Rome teaches many

things. One observes, among other things, how the development and growth of all industrial and commercial undertakings are precisely followed. Mention might be made of the Italian Pirelli concern, which controls the rubber and cable industry in the Empire. Immediately war ended, this firm established depots and repair shops for motor tyres and explored sources of raw material for local production. Experiments were also made with Herea rubber, which proved to be extremely costly.

Between industrial activity and transport a connecting link had to be created which rendered production and a consumption independent of each other. The Italian *Gazette* announced, in February 1938, that according to Royal decree large warehouses were to be erected in Italian East Africa for storing agricultural produce and goods from East Africa, Italy, and other lands. These storehouses were to be placed under the supervision of the appropriate Government authorities.

\* \* \*

There is no question of the normalization process—hardly a couple of years have passed since the war ended—having reached any kind of conclusion. Work is going on feverishly in all spheres; everything is in the building stage. But one can already say that conditions and living are becoming more and more normal and are adjusting themselves, without, of course, sacrificing their colonial character.

Cities like Addis Abeba, for instance, retain their African atmosphere, but are being more and more influenced by the Italian. They have, in addition, a marked international stamp. It is interesting to note that even now, after the departure of anti-Italian elements, approximately 40 per cent of all trading concessions are in the hands of Greeks, Armenians, Libyans, etc., who were resident in Ethiopia before the Italian occupation. Obviously, they have to conform with the regulations and, not least, keep to maximum wages and maximum prices. Those who commit no offences can pursue their activities in greater security under

the Italian regime than in former days, when arbitrary methods were the rule.

In hotel-keeping, too, foreigners who are good linguists, and have proved their ability, can carry on, assuming that they come to terms with the two semi-State societies which are gradually extending the network of hotels throughout Italian East Africa. There is a project now in existence to build suitable hotels in the six principal towns. They will be practical buildings, containing on the average thirty to fifty bedrooms and simple dining-rooms.

Despite the great care which is being bestowed, it is not possible to forecast accurately and make precise calculations ; but the authorities are generous enough to make good acknowledged mistakes.

The economic question is closely allied to the political task, and both, as in the Mother Country, must follow Fascist principles, that is with consideration for social aspects. It was Mussolini who said : " The New Empire was created by the people ; it is a national undertaking."

## EPILOGUE

WITH expectant eyes and receptive minds we have surveyed the New Empire, and we have seen it as it really is. We have met the colonists in their work clothes, for all hands are busy from morn till night.

In the spirit we also took our share in the great work which Fascism is performing on unexploited African soil. Constantly it has been our wish and thought that seeds which are sown to-day may bring forth rich fruit to-morrow and sustain future generations amid conditions of peace. Vast sacrifices are required to raise land and people on to the plane of worthy humanity. But when that has been done, and the life foundation has been laid, then the building can grow upwards and give views of more distant horizons. However, the plough which breaks the soil, and the arms which protect it, must not be allowed to rust, nor rest ; danger can only be eluded by the wakeful. But no matter where danger may threaten, Rome guards, Rome warns, Rome fights !

The task is to provide a safe future for millions of peasants, sons of the Motherland, and their children's children. The people and history guard the Imperial Throne of the King-Emperor. The ' Bridge-Head of the Empire ' and Libya's valiant hosts stand guarding at the door, that the harvest may bring increasing blessings and that gold in rich quantities may benefit the Mother Country.

A nation is spiritually armed when, with genuine youthful energy, it stretches out towards the future—like Germany, like the brother country. African territory, the land which once belonged to us, still waits for us Germans. We are a nation without room ; according to justice and knowledge it will and must be ours !



The reborn Empire, Rome's new might in the world, is carrying the banner in Africa's east ahead of us. Germany's place in the African sun is also being demanded by the Duce—that he has announced over and over again. Fascism and its related Movement—they will march triumphantly through the open gates of the world.

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# HURST & BLACKETT'S

## *Spring List*

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### General Books

#### **HERMANN GOERING—The Man and His Work** **Dr. Erich Gritzbach**

Preface by R. H. BRUCE LOCKHART

Author of "GUNS OR BUTTER", etc.

Here, from the pen of General Goering's Chief-of-Staff, is a full-length biography of one of the most prominent characters in the Crisis of last autumn. It must be an important work to the British public because Goering himself, as chief of the Nazi Air Force and Hitler's right-hand man, is obviously a leading figure in European politics.

The book deals with the General's parentage, upbringing, war career, his flights to Switzerland and Sweden, his two marriages. It describes his actions during the critical phases of the Nazi movement, his drive in putting the Four-Year-Plan into operation.

It shows General Goering to be a great statesman and a sublime patriot: it dwells with emotion on his love of children and for the poor.

We give below an extract from the preface by R. H. Bruce Lockhart.

"I doubt if the average Englishman possesses anything like a true picture of the personality and character of Herr Hitler's chief assistant. In his mind General Goering is probably fixed as a cross between a brutal tyrant and a festive Falstaff with a private wardrobe as large as that of the late Marquess of Anglesey.

"How far Herr Gritzbach's biographical study will correct these false impressions is a matter for conjecture. But *the book must be read. It is of prime importance as a study of present-day German mentality.*"

The book is unusually well illustrated with fine-quality photographs, and as an authentic and detailed account of Goering's career and personality will interest many people in England, whether or not they are sympathetic to the regime of which he is one of the central figures.

*Large Demy 8vo. Illustrated. About 18s. net.*

(February publication.)

UNSOUGHT ADVENTURE

Charles Barry

Author of "THE BOAT TRAIN MYSTERY", "A CASE DEAD AND BURIED", etc.

It is ten years since the late Lewis Melville, well-known biographer of Thackeray, wrote as follows in his autobiography *Not All the Truth* :

"There was Charles Barry, a name which veils, but does not disguise from his friends, the identity of one who, having been private soldier, artillery and staff officer in the Tsar's army during the War, found it advisable to leave the Russian ranks after his refusal to swear a provisional oath of provisional allegiance to the Provisional Government which followed the Revolution. He does not talk much of his subsequent work in the British Army, and all that is known of his activities is deduced from his habit of turning up suddenly in the most extraordinary places, such as Archangel, Tagg's Island, or Jassy, under various aliases. It is to be feared that these aliases baffled his friends as much as they were calculated to mislead the enemy, for it is, he tells me, a fact that at one time our War Office, his employers, granted him two commissions under the impression that he was two separate and distinct people. After the War he found an outlet for some of his energy in editorial work for the International Labour Office of the League of Nations ; but regular office hours and life on the placid shores of Leman palled, and he is now writing mystery tales which—I hope that he will not mind my saying—for all their thrills, must be pale, anaemic things compared with the plain and unvarnished autobiography which I am trying to persuade him to write."

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(March Publication)

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Its effect was startling. The jury was, not unreasonably, shocked when the certificate was read in Court, and the Attorney-General indignantly declared it to be nothing less than an attack on the reigning monarch. The Judge denounced it as "an intimidation", as, if genuine, it showed that George IV and all his brothers and sisters were illegitimate. Thereupon the plaintiff's case was summarily—and some people thought unjustly—closed; certain affidavits were not permitted to be read, and the whole batch of documents, having been declared "gross and impudent forgeries", was impounded. They have never been seen since.

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## SPRING ANNOUNCEMENTS, 1939

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